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HALLENGE OF WOMEN'S HISTORY

origins of US Capitalism

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One important aspect of contemporary feminism has been the effort to reassert the experience and practice of women against the silence and exclusion of traditional historiographic discourse. In this issue, Elizapeth Fox-Genovese provides the first synoptic assessment of the multi-faceted interests and accomplishments of the new 'women's history' to which she has been an important contributor. Although still in he inaugural stages of research, women's history challenges us to recognize the radical insufficiency of received analyses which ignore the role of gender relations in historical causation. Fox-Genovese makes a powerfully sustained argument against the tendency to compensate for these historiographic lacunae by simply counterposing a second, alternative history—based on female subjects—to the 'single, trumphant consciousness' of the male subject. Whatever its intention, such selfghettoization of the history of women serves only to replicate the construction of female as 'Other' which pervades official histories. Instead she calls for an authentic placing of women's past 'in history' through the recognition of gender systems as primary categories of historical analysis.

In Fox-Genovese's view the theorization of the universality of male dominance in history can only be a starting point for wide-ranging investigations of the historically specific gender systems which actually impose the 'authoritative versions of masculinity and femininity' in particular eras. Thus she rejects the common usage of 'patriarchy' to denote male oppression in general because it collapses the differences between distinct systems of gender relations: in this case between precapitalist 'patriarchal' society (where men are formally subordinated to other men, as well as women to men) and capitalist society (where the formal 'equality' of men creates a new, more contradictory basis for the inequality of women). This emphasis on historical specification is accompanied by an insistence on the need to explore the dense and complex articulations between gender systems and class formations. In a future issue we will publish a major text by Wally Seccombe on Demography and Marxism' which pursues these issues further.

Another historiographic debate with broad resonance for socialist theory use been the discussion of capitalism's origins. In NLR 104 we published

a critique of theories of capitalist development by Robert Brenner which asserted the priority of studying the historically developed class structures through which capitalist transition occurred. Charles Post now considers the process of 'primitive accumulation' in the most expansive capitalist economy of all—the United States. In elucidating the origins of the American Civil War and the hegemony of industrial capital. Post critically surveys the intersecting debates on the political economy of slavery, the role of family farming and the origins of the American bourgeoisie. He explains how in the 1850s the economic unification of the American social formation by merchant capital gave way to a polarized opposition between slavery on one hand, and an emergent bloc of Western small farmers and capitalist manufacturers on the other. The formation of a unique 'agro-industrial complex' incorporating the food processing and farm machinery industries, as well as the Western railroads, allowed industrial capital to subsume petty-commodity production—free farming—within a particularly dynamic regime of accumulation based on a growing internal market of continental. proportions. The US Civil War-arguably the last of the great bourgeoisdemocratic revolutions—removed the final fetters from this process.

In NLR 129 we published David Coates's trenchant critique of the Alternative Economic Strategy and the plausibility of working for socialism through the Labour Party. In the last issue, Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare, while accepting much of the force of Coates's criticism of the AES, challenged his characterization of the political stakes involved in the rise of the new Labour Left. Now Geoff Hodgson joins the debate from a third perspective. Rejecting what he considers to be 'zero-sum' conceptions of the class struggle, he argues that a real transitional strategy towards socialism must hinge upon the possibility of a new agenda of intermediate reforms. Even in the depths of the current world recession, Hodgson argues, important scope for reform still exists within British capitalism—provided a radicalized AES can be linked to 'substantially increased worker participation'.

150 years after his death, the relationship between the protean genius of Goethe and the age of revolution in which he lived remains a subject of intense debate. Walter Benjamin's fascinating sketch of Goethe's life, written for the uncompleted Great Soviet Encyclopedia in the late twenties, elicits the permanent tension and contradiction in Goethe's works between his profound intuition of the bourgeois world in birth and his rejection of its revolutionary politics. This, as Benjamin explains, we partially an irony of German history itself: the reciprocal failure of the

German Enlightenment and the German bourgeois revolution to join forces within a unified bourgeois worldview. Suggestively, Benjamin hints that much of the universalistic and enduring legacy of Goethe is precisely the result of his refusal to become the German Locke or Rousseau.

As we go to press we have learnt of the British landings on the Falkland Islands. The bloody excursion of the Thatcher regime in the South Atlantic, supported by the official 'Opposition', underscores the dangers of revived militarism which we signalled in our last issue, and demonstrates once again the autonomous capacity of European imperialism, without orders from Washington, to kindle the flashpoints of global crisis. Moreover, Thatcher's bid to reflate her collapsing popularity with a jingoistic sideshow sets an ominous precedent for a Reagan administration clutching at means of restoring its own domestic support. The British example immeasurably increases the danger of a US intervention in Central America or the Caribbean-not to mention the Persian Gulf or the tip of Arabia. The militant Argentinian working class will deal with its dictators in due course; in the meantime it is the first duty of British socialists to unite massively and unconditionally against Thatcher's war.

THE FALKLANDS: THATCHER'S WAR, LABOUR'S GUILT

The Socialist Society's first pamphlet is a polemic by Anthony Arblaster against the British military adventure in the South Atlantic. It looks at the background to the war and the charade of negotiations; arguing that the crisis potentially represents 'an enormous setback for the Left and even for liberal attitudes in Britain'

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Placing Women's History in History

Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question; ... How does it feel to be a problem?' Thus writes not Simone de Beauvoir, but W.E.B. DuBois. He is speaking, not of women, but of black people—a black male intellectual—within a white world. And he answers his own question: '... the Negro is ... born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on a mused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring leals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn under.' DuBois poignantly insists upon his unwillingness to forgo either de of his twoness: he claims for himself and his people the freedom to be a tack American. But fidelity to that twoness requires holding fiercely to both

its elements. It is the tension itself, the dialectic of his sundered identity, that he wishes to live: distinct, but equal; of, but not wholly assimilated to. And the free living of that tension necessitates full recognition of the Black past, of a discrete Afro-American history.

It is far from my mind to trivialize the particular meaning of DuBois's words by simply identifying female and Afro-American experience. But however different the problems and histories of women and oppressed racial groups, the living of twoness applies to both. Joan Kelly has suggested as much in writing of the 'doubled vision' of feminist theory. And her remarks have addressed the double perspective of social and sexual oppression that must inform all feminist theory. Increasingly, feminist scholars and theorists are recognizing the intersection of class and gender systems in all systems of male dominance, and, increasingly, they are agreeing, as Michele Rosaldo has so strongly put it, that male dominance characterizes so much of known human social organization as to function as a general rule—for which, as with all rules, there may be an occasional exception, but no systematic disproof. 4

I. One History or Two?

To the extent that male dominance, like class dominance, has obtained throughout human history, there is no women's history, nor forms of female power, apart from it. The wealth of studies of women produced in recent years might tempt us into thinking differently. There has been, and remains, so much to be uncovered. The annals of women's exploits, endurances, and contributions are growing steadily. It is now at least acknowledged that while men were performing the feats, building the institutions, producing the goods and cultures, ruling the peoples, and generally busying themselves with those activities we are wont to call history, women were invariably doing something—if only bearing more men to make more history and more women to permit them to do so. And we are now equipped to ask—sources permitting—just what were they doing? But adding women to the received account especially in the form of a few more neglected worthies or a lot more descriptive social history—does not necessarily change anything substantive in our manner of writing history. Make no mistake, the inclusion of women within conventional historical narratives cannot be dismissed lightly. Their exclusion has been so total that every rectification must be welcome. The sheer quantitative accumulation of information alone will force choices force us to drop standard material on men and hence sharpen the visibility of women within history. But adding women to history is not the same as adding women's history.

What, then, are the theoretical implications of placing women's history in history? Here, I shall suggest (1) that we must adopt gender system as a fundamental category of historical analysis, understanding that such

Cross-Cultural Understanding,' Sigur 5, No 3 (Spring 1980), pp 389-417, esp. 394

¹ W E Burghardt DuBon, The Souls of Black Folk, New York 1964, p. 15
² Bod, pp. 16-17.

³ Joan Kelly, 'The Doubled Vision of Feminist Theory. A Postscript to the "Women and Power" Conference,' Feminist Studies, No. 3 (Spring 1979), pp. 216–27.

⁴ M Z. Rosaldo, 'The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and

systems are historically, not biologically, determined; (2) that the forms of male dominance vary historically and cannot be assimilated under the general rubric of patriarchy; (3) that simply to substitute women's history for mainstream history leaves us prisoners of precisely that pernicious status as 'other' to which mainstream history has assigned us; (4) that capitalism and the great bourgeois revolutions have tended to generalize gender difference as the custodian of displaced notions of hierarchy and dependence, and thus practically to repudiate their theoretical promises of equality for all; (5) that the expansion of capitalism and modern representative government has attempted to bind men of different classes, races, and ethnic groups together through the double promise of individualism in the public sphere and male dominance in the home; (6) that all the modern languages of social theory are impregnated with the ideological premises of this gender system; (7) that most modern institutions, including the purportedly neutral market, have systematically extended gender difference as a fundamental part of social order; (8) that official theories of the family and the sexual division of labour cannot be explained in functional terms, but must be understood as the product of class and gender struggle; and (9) that our dominant social theories have provided us with no adequate way to assess the indispensable contributions of women to collective life in society, including class and racial dominance on the one side and the resistance of the oppressed on the other.

The Recovery of Women's Roles

Adding women to history has led scholars to uncover and to chart the regular participation of women in almost all domains of social production and reproduction. But the majority of the evidence they have amassed pertains to arenas and activities that do not normally figure at the centre of conventional history-or do so only under the intentionally depersonalized processes of industrialization, modernization or institutionbuilding. We can now demonstrate, what anyone with a modicum of sense already knew, that women as a group have performed socially necessary labour at least in proportion to their numbers in the population as a whole. We know that women have eased illness, attended childbirth, inspired and sustained religious groups, presided over arcane bodies of knowledge, including magic and religious cults. We know that they have forged bonds among themselves, struggled valiantly for political and social ideals in their own organizations and together with their male comrades, inaugurated and sustained institutions and networks that provided the very substance of the lives of communities.

Anthropologists, ethnographers, and imaginative social historians have recovered many of the previously neglected signs of women's large roles in all pre-capitalist social groups. Many of their insights have proved practically or metaphorically transferable. For those conversant with the literature, it is inviting to seek female powers, female spaces, even discrete female cultures or world-views within the life of any community.⁵

⁵ See, among many, Michele Z. Rosaldo & Louise Lamphere, (eds.), Women, Culture and Society, Stanford 1974; Rayna Reiter, (ed), Towards on Anthropology of Women, New York 1976; Shirley Ardner, (ed), Perceiving Women, London 1975, and Defining Females—The Nature of Women in Society, New York 1978; Emestine Finedl, "The Position of Women."

Sensitive scholars like Natalie Davis have taught us to trace implicit gender relations, their affirmations and reversals, through cultural forms such as the charivari. We know much of the special and socially validated role of women in bread riots in particular and in defending the norms of the moral economy in general. Pioneers of the first wave of the new women's history, including Nancy Cott, Katherine Sklar, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and many more, have familiarized us with the special worlds of women within American society. More recent studies, including those by Ruth Bordin, Mari Jo Buhle, Carl Degler, William Leach, Winifred Wandersee and others, have placed greater emphasis on women's place in and contributions to the general development of American society and culture. But this knowledge does not challenge the inescapable truth that the vast majority of those activities deemed

Appearance and Reality," Asthropological Quarterly 49 (1967), pp. 97–108; Susan Carol Rogers, "Women's Piace: A Curncal Review of Anthropological Theory," Comperative Studies in Society and History 20, No. 1 (1978), pp. 125–62; Lucienne Roubin, 'Male Space and Female Space Within the Provençal Community,' in R. Forster & O. Ranum, (eds.), Rural Society in France, Baltimore 1977; Françoise Zonabend, La Mémoire Longue. Temps et Historis an Villege, Pana 1980. For recent works that emphasize the constraints on women's social roles, see, among many, A. Kuhn and A.M. Wolpe, (eds.), Femissium and Materialism, London 1978; Kate Young, Carol Wolkowitz, and Roslyn McCullagh, (eds.), Marriage and the Market. Women's Suberdination in International Portpactive, London 1981; Monsque Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, (eds.), Women and Colonization. Anthropological Portpactives, New York 1980; Maurice Godelier, "The Origins of Male Domination," MLR 127 (May—June 1981), pp.

3-17.

Natalie Zemon Davia, Society and Culture in Early Modern France, Stanford 1975; Oliven Hufton, 'Women and the Family Economy in Eighteenth-Century France,' France Historical Studies IX (1975), pp. 1-12, and her The Pear in Eighteenth-Century France, New York & London 1975; Mary Johnson, 'Old Wine in New Bottles: The Institutional Changes for Women of the People During the French Revolution,' in Carol R. Berkin and Chara M. Lovett, (eds.), Women, War and Randston, New York 1980, pp. 107-44; Darlene Gay Levy and Harriet Branson Applewhite, 'Women of the Popular Classes in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795, Inc. etc., pp. 9-36; Nicole Castan, 'La criminalité familiale dans le ressort du Parlement de Toulouse (1690-1730),' in A. Abbesteci, (ed.), Crimos et Criminalité en France 170-18 Siècles, Paris 1971; E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,' Past and Pranest 10 (1971), pp. 76-136.

7 Nancy Cott, The Bonds of Womanbood, New Haven 1977; Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catherms Beecher. A Study in American Demerticity, New Haven 1973; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual,' Squar, No. 1 (Autumn 1975). See also, Nina Auerbach, Communities of Women. An Idea in Faction, Cambridge (Mass.) 1978, Nina Baym, Women's Faction. A Guide to Nevels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870, Ithaca & London 1978; Keith B Melder, Beginnings of Sisterbood. The American Woman's Rights Movement, 1800-1850. New York 1977; Susan Phinney Conrad, Porus the Thought. Intellect and Women in Remarks: America, 1830-1866, New York 1976. The favourable interpretation of women's bonds and values was sharply attacked, but the importance of their existence confirmed by Ann Douglas, The Fearmeration of American Culture, New York 1977. The more recent studies include, Ruth Bordin, Women and Temperance. The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900, Philadelphia 1981; Mari Jo Buhle, Women and American Socialism 1870-1920, Urbana, Chleago, London, 1981; Carl Degler, At Odds. Wester and the Family in America from the Revelution to the Present, New York & Oxford 1980; William Leach, True Love and Perfect Union The Feminus Critique of Sex and Society, New York 1980; Winlifted Wandersee, Women's Work and Family Values 1920-1940, Cambridge (Mass.) 1981; Estelle B Freedman, Their Sisters' Keepers. Western's Prison Reform in America, 1830-1930, Ann Arbor 1981; Susan Ware, Beyond Suffrage. Women in the New Deal, Cambridge (Mass.) 1981; Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters. The Revolutionary Experience of American Women 1750-1800, Boston 1980. For a provocative, if overly rigid, attempt to assess women's responses to the constraints on them, see, Lyle Koehler, A Sasrab for Power. The "Weaher Sex" in Seventeenth-Century New England, Urbana, Chicago, London 1980. Blanche Wiesen Cook, Wester and Support Networks, New York 1979, makes a strong, explicit case for the specific role of female friendships as supports for single women acting in a world in which their male equivalents enjoyed the support of families.

worthy of the official record have been performed largely by and credited almost exclusively to male members of ruling classes.

As a coherent chronological and interpretive enterprise, women's history has been most successful with respect to the United States. The history of European women remains spotty, although the quality of discrete work is high. We should be hard pressed to write a consistent general history of European women, or even of the experience of women within a single European country. The history of English women seems rather more coherent than the history of many continental women, perhaps because national unity, precocious industrialization, and a visible and successful suffrage movement provide some obvious structure. But even in England, women's history has yet to secure a recognized place in the academy. And elite pretensions notwithstanding, social history and family history—whatever their merits and quality—do not provide adequate proxies for women's history. The continental countries that figure most prominently in historical scholarship have lacked strong national women's movements, at least until very recently, and have hardly been receptive to women's history as a discipline. Thus, despite excellent discrete studies, we lack coherent national histories of European women. For the moment, we make do with the presidences of seventeenthcentury France, the Jidischer Frauenband, Lyonnaise Protestants, Aleksandra Kollontai, Flora Tristan and the other identifiable groups and figures that particular scholars have studied.8 Occasionally a work such as

⁸ Carolyn Lougee, Le Perudu des Femmes, Princeton 1977; Marion A Kaplan, The Jewish Feminist Movement in Gurmany The Campaigns of the Industrier Franchised, 1940-1938, Westport 1979, Barbar Evans Clements, Bolthouk Fournist. The Life of Aleksandra Kolloutas, Bloomington 1979; Beatrice Farnsworth, Aleksandra Kollontas: Socialism, Famusia, and the Bolthwilk Revolution, Stanford 1980, Cathy Porter, Alexandra Kollentas: The Levely Straggle of the Woman Who Defied Lemm, New York & London 1980; Natalie Zemon Davis, Society and Culture; Dominique Desanti, Flora Tristan. La Femme Reveltée, Paris 1972; Jules-L. Puech, La Vis et L'Ocuere de Flore Tristen, Paris 1925; Laura S. Strumingher, Women and the Making of the Working Class: Lyon 1830-1870, St. Alban's (Vt.) 1979; Edith Thomas, Panime Reland. Secretarie et Férentime en XIXe Siècle, Paris 1916, and her Louise Michel, Montreal 1980; Steven C. Hause and Anne R. Kenney, "The Limits of Suffragist Behavior: Legalism and Militancy in France, 1876-1922,' American Historical Researe 86, No. 4 (October 1981), pp. 781-806; Charles Sowerwine, Las Fammes et le Socialisme, Paris, 1978; Jean H. Quataert, Relactions Feminists in German Social Democracy, 1885-1917, Princeton 1979; Werner Thonnessen, The Emencipation of Woman The Rise and Decline of the Women's Movement in German Social Democracy 1863-1933, London 1973; Richard J. Evana, The Fearmest Movement in Germany 1894-1933, London & Beverley Hills 1976, Karen Honeycutt, 'Clara Zetkin: A Left-wing Socialist and Feminist in Wilhelmian Germany,' PhD. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1975; Richard Stites, The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia Featurism, Nibilism, and Beliberism, 1860-1930, Princeton 1978, Dorothy Atkinson, Alexander Dallin and Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, (eds.), Women in Raims, Stanford 1977. The literature on women in English history is now vast. Among many, see, Barbara Kanner, (ed.), The Wasses of England From Anglo-Saxon Times to the Present. Interpretive Bibihographical Essays, Hamden 1979, Dons Stenton, The English Women in History, London 1957, Martha Vicinus, (ed.), Suffer and Be Still, Bloomington & London 1972, and her sequel, A Widness Sphere: Changing Roles of Vactories Women, Bloomington & London, 1977; Leonore Davidoff, The Best Circles Society, Etiquette and the Sousses, London 1973; Ivy Pinchbeck, Women Workers in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850, London & New York 1930, J. Jean Hecht, The Domestic Servent Class in Eighteenth Contary England, London 1956; J. M. Beattie, "The Criminality of Women in Eighteenth-Century England,' Journal of Social History 8 (Summer 1975), pp. 80-116; Sally Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London 1820-1850,' in The Rights and Wrongs of Women, ed Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, Harmondsworth 1976; Angus McLauren, 'Abortion in England, 1890-1914,' Victorian Studies 20 (1977), pp. 379-400, Margaret Hewitt, Wives and Mothers in Victorian Industry, London 1958; Françoise

Richard J. Evans's The Feminists provides a comparative perspective. And the rich work on families, deviants and popular life, especially associated with the Annales School, offers passing insights on the experience of particular women. But even the most outstanding examples of this work, such as David Herlihy's and Christine Klappisch-Zuber's Les Toscans et leurs Familles, cannot properly be designated women's history. If work on inheritance and dowries has revealed much about the conditions of some women's lives, it has yet to be systematically integrated into a theory of women's history that directly addresses women's perceptions and experience. And if writing the history of

Basch, Relative Creatures. Victorian Wessen in Society and the Novel, New York 1974, Vineta Colby, Yesterday's Western Description Realism in the English Nevel, Princeton 1974; Elaine Showalter, A Leterature of Their Own: Women Novelists from the Broates to Doris Lessing, Princeton 1977; Mary Jacobus, "Tesa: The Making of a Pure Woman,' in Tearing the Veil. Ensys on Feministry, ed Susan Lipschitz, London 1978; Barbara Taylor, Religious Heresy and Feminism in Early English Socialism,' in shel; Dorothy Thompson, 'Women and Nineteenth-Century Radical Politics: A Lost Dimension, in Rights and Wrongs of Women, Anna Davin, Imperialism and Motherhood,' Hutery Workshop 5 (Spring 1978), pp. 9-65, F.K. Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in 19th Contrary England, Oxford 1980; Andrew Rosen, Rive up Women!, London 1974; David Morgan, Suffragists and Liberals. The Politics of Woman Suffrage in Britain, Oxford 1975; Silvin Franchini, Sylvia Pankhurst 1912-1914. Dal Suffrageone alla Revolucione Sociale, Pies 1980; Pat Thane, Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England,' Hutery Workshop 6 (Autumn 1978), pp. 29-51; Patricia Knight, 'Women and Abortion in Victorian and Edwardian England,' History Workshop 4 (Autumn 1977), pp 57-69; Angus McLauren, 'Women's Work and the Regulation of Family Smc, ' ibid, pp. 70-81, Frances Finnegan, Poverty and Practitation. A Study of Victorian Prestututes in York, Cambridge & New York 1979; Judith R. Walkowitz, Prestitution and Victorian Society, Women, Class, and the State, Cambridge & New York 1980. ⁹ Richard J. Evans, *The Feminuts*. London 1977. For other examples of comparative work, see, Ross Paulson, Women's Suffrage and Probabition: A Comparative Study of Equality and Social Control, Glenview 1973; Marilyn I. Boxer and Jean H. Quataert, (eds.), Societist Women. European Socialist Feminism in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Continues, New York 1978; Jane Shaughter and Robert Kern, European Women on the Left. Socialism, Feminism, and the Problems Faced by Political Women, 1880 to the Present, Westport 1981; Joni Lovenduski and Illi Hills, (eds.), The Politics of the Second Electorate. Women and Public Participation, London 1981; Theresa McBride, The Domestic Revolution The Modernitzation of Household Service in England and France, 1820-1920, New York 1976, and her "The Long Road Home: Women's Work and Industrialization,' in Becoming Visible: Women in European History, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonx, Boston 1977; Leila J. Rupp, Mebelrying Western for War. German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945, Princeton 1978; Joan W Scott and Louise A. Tilly, 'Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth Century Europe,' Comparative Studies in Society and History 17 (1975), pp. 375-93; Pierre Fauchery, La Destinio Éliminio dans le Roman Européen du Dix-Hutsème Siècle, 1713-1807; Etnei de Gynécomythue Romanesque, Paris 1972. For a critique of the Annales School's treatment of women's history, see Susan Mosher Sward, 'The Annales School and Feminist History: Opening Dialogue with the American Stepchild,' Steary (Autumn 1981), pp. 135-43. For some examples, among many, of the new family history, see David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, Les Tessess et Laurz Faurilles: Une Étude du Catasto Florentin de 1427, Paria 1978, Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1100-1800, New York 1977; Jean-Louis Flandrin, Familias in Former Times. Kinshep, Household and Secondity, Cambridge 1979; Julius Kirshner and Anthony Molho, "The Dowry Fund and the Marriage Market in Early Quattrocento Florence,' The Journal of Modern Huttery 50 (1978), pp. 403-38, Andre Burguière, 'De Malthus à Max Weber; le manage tardif et l'esprit d'entreprise,' Amales E.S.C. 27, Nos. 4-5 (July-October), pp. 1128-38; David Levine, Family Formation in an Age of National Capitalism, New York 1977; Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, 'Zacharie, ou le père évincé: les ntes nupusux en Toscane,' Assaks E.S.C. 34, No. 6 (November-December 1979), pp. 1216-1243, and her 'Household and Family in Tuscany in 1427,' in Household and Family in Part Time, ed. Peter Laslett with Richard Wall, Cambridge & New York 1972, pp. 267-82, Robert Forster and Orest Ramum, (eds.), Family and Society. Essays From the Annales, Baltimore 1978; Diana Owen Hughes, "Toward Historical Ethnography: Notarial Records and Family History in the Middle Ages,' Historical Methods Nandetter 7 (1974), pp. 61-71,

European women is difficult, to write the history of women in the rest of the world is more difficult yet, splendid monographs notwithstanding.

Even for the United States, the problems remain formidable. The most coherent picture to emerge so far is that of white Northeastern womenhood, with only sketches of white Southern and Western women. Black, Spanish-American, Chicana, Native American, Chinese-American women and others have yet to find a place in the standard accounts. Irish, Italian and Jewish-American women—as in lesser measure their Polish, Scandinavian, German, and Slav sisters—have achieved a foothold in historical consciousness thanks to the efforts of the new labour history. But to take only one small example, we know next to nothing about American women and Catholicism, much less about Catholic women's education. Northern women's evangelicalism has mented considerable attention, but that of Southern women, black or white, remains essentially unexplored. And if we are being taught to respect the strength and progressivism of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, we have no major modern study of the Young Women's Christian Association which rivalled it in numbers and influence and may have had a significant edge with respect to social reform on behalf of working women, 10 Withal, this partial catalogue of what we do not know is not intended as a reproach: the subject is young and thriving, and the gaps

her 'Domestic Ideals and Social Behaviour: Evidence from Medieval Genoa,' in *The Family in Huttery*, ed. Charles Rosenberg, Philadelphia 1975, pp. 115–43, and her 'Kinsmen and Neighbors in Medieval Genoa,' in *The Medieval City*, ed., H.A. Miakimin, D. Herlihy, and A. L. Udovitch, New Haven 1977. Some of the more recent work on family and marriage is demonstrating the ways in which female downes contributed to class relations. See especially, Diana Owen Hughes, 'From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe,' *Journal of Family Huttery* 3 (1978), pp. 262–96; and Susan Mosher Stuard, 'Dowry Inflation and Increments in Wealth and Medieval Raguss (Dubrovnik),' *The Journal of Economic Huttery* XLI, No. 4 (December 1981), pp. 795–812.

¹⁰ For examples of the new labour history, see the various articles in R. Edwards, M. Reich, D. Gordon, (eds.), Labor Market Segmentation, Lexington (Mass.) 1975, and in Milton Cantor and Bruce Laurie, (eds.), Class, Sex and the Woman Worker, Westport 1977. For a general overview, see Alice Kesaler-Harris, Womes Have Almeys Worked. A Historical Overview, Old Westbury 1981; James J. Kenneally, Wasses and American Trade Unions, St. Albans (Vt.) 1978, Susan Estabrook Kennedy, If All We Did Was to Weep at Home: A History of White Working-Class Women in America, Bloomington & London 1979; Lealie J. Tentier, Wage-Earning Women. Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States, 1900-1930, New York & Oxford 1979. Many of the older studies are still valuable, e.g., Edith Abott, Women in Industry. A Study in American Economic History, New York & London 1910; Elizabeth Beardsley Butler, Women and the Trades. Pittsburgh, 1907-1908, New York 1911. Among the many specialized studies, see, Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, Family and Community Italian Immigrants in Buffale, 1880-1930, Ithaca & London 1971; Maureen Greenwald, Women, Work, and War. The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the. United States, Westport 1980; Karen Sue Anderson, Wartime Westport 1981; David Katzman, Sepan Days a Wook. Domestic Serpice in Industrializing America, New York & Oxford 1978; Philip S. Poner, Women in the American Labor Movement: from World War I to the Prusst, New York 1980; Karen Beck Skold, 'The Job He Left Behind. American Women in the Shippards During World War II,' in Women, War and Revolution, pp. 55-76; Ruth Milkman, 'Women's Work and the Economic Crisis; Some Lessons from the Great Depression,' The Rusius of Radical Political Economists 8, No. 1 (Spring 1976), pp. 73-97. On the YWCA, see, Mary S. Sima, The Natural History of a Social Institution—the Y.W.C.A., New York 1936; Elizabeth Wilson, Fifty Years of Association Work Among Young Women, New York 1916; Elsie D. Harper, The Past is Probable Fifty Years of Social Action in the YWCA, New York 1963; Sophonisha Breckinnidge, Women in the Twentleth Continues. A Study of Their Political, Social and Economic Activeties, New York 1933, pp. 28, 56-57, 85, 260-70 passing. Helen Bittar, "The Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York,' PhD dissertation, New York University 1979.

will be filled. Filling those gaps, however, will not automatically clarify the place of women's history in history.

Official History and Woman as 'Other'

The dominant tendency in American women's history has established a series of questions and hypotheses. The central debates concern the appropriate weight we should grant to personal and formal political achievements and values in women's lives; the importance of women's identification with the family; the social significance of women's ad bos or informal powers within families or communities; the loss or gain in status for women attendant upon political or economic change (the American Revolution, industrialization), the changing nature and value of women's work. Scholars differ sharply on these and other questions. But despite disagreements, historians of women have tended to emphasize the distinctive attributes that differentiate the lives of all women from those of all men. They have drawn attention to the female life cycle—especially to recurrent and risky childbirth, but also to the particular experiences of youth and age, to the paucity of rites of passage, to women's special experience of medical practice. They have stressed the gap that separates most female lives from public events and have reminded us that the invention of reliable contraception has more decisively affected the lives of women than the majority of political revolutions. 11

This line of thought leads towards a recognizable theory of women's history. It would, perhaps, be unfair to say that such a theory exclusively emphasizes the private character of female experience. It also points to the extension of women's private experience into the public realm in the wide range of activities referred to as social housekeeping. Recently, there has been a growing emphasis on the political significance of women's movements for social reform. Apparently, this emphasis derives from a general commitment to the significance of culture and gender as politics

¹¹ See, for example, Joan Hoff Wilson, 'The Illusion of Change Women and the American Revolution, in Alfred F. Young, (ed.), The American Revolution, Explorations in the History of American Radiculism, DeKalb 1976, pp. 383-446; or Gerda Lemer, The Majority Finds its Part, New York 1979. For a sharp critique of some of the early writings on women and medicine, see, Regina Morantz, The Perils of Ferninist History,' Journal of Interdisciplinary History 4, No 4 (Spring 1974) For a recent formulation of the differences between those who emphasize culture and those who emphasize politics in women's history, see, Ellen DuBois, Mari Jo Buhle, Temma Kaplan, Gerda Lerner, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, 'Politics and Culture in Women's History: A Symposium,' Fearmed Studies 6, No 1 (Spring 1980), pp. x6-63. This debate appears in somewhat different form among women on the left who find parmarchy as important, if not more important than class relations in the oppression of women See, for example, Lydia Sargent, (ed.), Wester and Revolution. A Discusses of the Unbappy Marriage of Marxism and Femmism, Boston 1981; Batya Weinbaum, The Curious Courtship of Women's Liberation and Socialism, Boston 1978, Zillah Esenstein, (ed), Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Sociasist Feminism, New York 1978, and her The Radical Fature of Laberal Features, London & Boston 1980 The debate becomes almost unrecognizable in the hands of Jean Bethke Elahtain, Public Man, Prinate Women in Social and Political Thought, Princeton 1981. Her broadinde attack on such diverse figures as Nancy Choderow, Myra Dinnerstein, Juliet Mitchell, Sheila Rowbotham, and the late Michelle Z. Rosaldo, among many, is presented in a tone that closes rather than opens debate. Her open red-batting, founded on a pre-school reading of Marx and a caricature of contemporary Marxism, have made her fashionable in those liberal circles increasingly inclined to cold war politics. See, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "The Personal Is Not Political Enough,' Marxist Perspectives & (Winter 1970/80), pp 94-113

and a general commitment to minimizing the significance of class, including class differences among women. Obviously, serious attention to gender as a category of historical analysis obliges the historian, or indeed the social critic, to take full account of the role of gender in the elaboration of forms of political power-but hardly to substitute it outright for class. Much of the work that emphasizes gender to the exclusion of class still fails to confront the hard truth emphasized by Barbara Leslie Epstein: the legacy of domesticity may have empowered women to speak out on behalf of particular moral values and may have bequeathed them networks from which to construct movements and alliances, but it severely hampered their view of themselves, of their proper social roles and of their goals. It also ignores the class foundations of the varieties of domestic life and women's conflicting interpretations of public issues depending upon their class and ethnic origin. Thus, Carl Degler's discovery that the interests of the family and the interests of women's personal development were 'at odds' throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries falls woefully short of offering either a theory of women's history or a theory of women's place in mainstream history. Degler correctly identifies the paradox that the modern family and modern feminism emerged in the same historical period, but he wilfully ignores the class relations—the political economy and social relations that are indispensable to understanding either. Degler, in fact, offers no challenge to the dominant theory of American women's history, but merely a specific synthesis of the monographic work on which that theory rests. Nor has this dominant theory been seriously challenged by the recent arbitrary attempts to broaden its purported political significance. An occasional study, such as Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's fine book on Jesse Daniel Ames, wisely bypasses the theory entirely in favour of setting forth the complexities of specific women's social action. 12 But as a rule, the theory that informs most work in American women's history implicitly accepts the dominant male view of women as 'the Other' and merely attempts to turn it to advantage. This view of women's history, which at its most rich and complex has indeed taught us much, does not necessarily challenge mainstream history. Or rather, it poses a challenge so extreme as to make interchange next to impossible.

The nearly universal exclusion of women from history as it has been written and taught has been no accident or mindless oversight. The best available evidence suggests that the great world-historical religions, like powerful and successful states, have systematized and extended the

¹² Degler, At Odds; Barbar Lealie Epstein, The Politics of Deserticity. Western, Evergelism and Temperance in Numberals-Century America, Middletown 1981; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, Revolt Against Christy. Jesu Daniel America and the Wassen's Campaign Against Lynching, New York 1974. Much of the debate within women's history had addressed the merits of suffrage as a goal of the women's movement and its value as an accomplishment. The strongest defence of the importance of politics is presented by Ellen Dubois, Fermisian and Suffrage. The Emergence of an Independent Wassen's Movement in America 1845–1869, Ithaca & London 1978. See also her excellent edition, Elizabeth Cody Stanton/Susan B. Authory. Correspondence, Writings, Spacker, New York 1981, esp. pp. 172–200, where she introduces Stanton's own sharp entique of the women's movement Another part of the debate addresses the value of cross-class alliances among women, especially their value to working-class women. For a recent strong, if occasionally flawed defense of the discrete interests of working-class women and the failure of middle-class women to understand those interests, see Meredith Tax, The Rung of the Wassen: Fernicus Soliderity and Class Confect, 1816–1917, New York & London 1980.

ubiquitous patterns of male dominance that pervade most societies. The same can be said of most formal institutions, including the modern professions, labour unions and political parties. In important ways, capitalism accelerated this process, as did, at least initially, the great bourgeois revolutions that consolidated its political foundations. Western imperialism exported it. And few socialist revolutions have done much to correct the trend. Precisely those institutions and groups most interested in producing histories as the record of their own rise and mission have reflected male intentions. The historical subject has, overwhelmingly, been male. In this perspective, history records man's escape from and triumph over the submerging claims of domesticity and nature (closely identified with the engulfing feminine). Man has made history by defining not-man as Other and then identifying his success with the triumph of universal values of justice and order.

With rare exceptions, women's history has addressed precisely what was left out of official history. Historians of women can, therefore, be tempted to reject all official history as irrelevant to female experience. 13 But this strategy, in its purest form, perpetuates many of the most pernicious myths of official history. For the strategy capitulates to official history's insistence upon the universal claims of female biology. The confrontation between women's history, as it has taken shape during the past decade, and mainstream history offers a special opportunity to rethink the basic premises that inform historical interpretation—but only if the confrontation engages both parties. Women, as members of one sex, but also members of all societies, must cultivate and take pride in that twoness of which DuBois wrote. They must also recognize that even their identification as a gender is itself an historical construction. The domination of women by men figures at the core of the domination of specific classes, races, ethnic groups, and peoples. It intersects with all forms of subordination and superordination and cannot be understood apart from them.

II. Gender Systems and Historical Analysis

Feminist scholarship has correctly insisted upon the social construction of gender. It is now widely accepted that all societies promote identities and roles taken to be appropriate to the genders and, normally, present those identities and roles as natural emanations of sexual difference. The relations between any innate biological difference and socially promulgated gender differentiation may be left aside for the moment, historians must accept the gender identities and roles that different societies assign to males and females as historical facts that require historical analysis. They must also recognize the characteristics ascribed to males and females as interrelated, as integral parts of a dominant gender system. ¹⁴ The primary theoretical implication of the confrontation between women's history and official history is this recognition of gender system

¹³ The most sophisticated statement of the position that official history has nothing to do with women's history is to be found in Joan Kelly-Gadol, 'Did Women Have a Renaissancer' in Bridenthal and Koonz, (eds.), Becausing Visible.

¹⁴ See, for example, Gayle Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women Notes on the Political Economy of Sex,' in Rayna Reiter, (ed.), Towards as Authorpology of Women See also Carol MacCormack and Manlyn Strathern, (eds.), Nature, Culture and Gooder, Cambridge 1980

as a primary category of historical analysis—as deeply ingrained in social and economic formations and the political institutions to which they give rise as class relations. The dominant gender system in any society delineates the authoritative versions of masculinity and femininity, the socially legitimated opportunities for living one's life as a male or a female. In addition, the gender system subsumes under gender differentiation much of the natural world and the varieties of human activities and experiences. The tremendous variation, across time and space, in the gender-specific allocation of forms of labour (tasks), attributes, and moral responsibilities clearly demonstrates the mutability of gender systems. It is fruitless to look for a uniform oppression of women, or a universal form of male dominance. But it is necessary to search out and analyse the allocation of roles and identities between the genders in order to understand the dynamics of any social system.

Understanding the gender system as a critical feature of all social relations simultaneously inaugurates the essential restoration of women to historical process and moves us beyond the deadend of attempting to establish sexual difference as an agent of historical causation. It enables us to understand women as full participants in the human struggle to survive and to triumph over nature in the sense of creating a distinctly human world. But we must also avoid jumping from the frying pan of ubiquitous sexual conspiracy into the fire of complacent functionalism. The female outrage that fuelled much of the early feminist scholarship and still informs some of it has forced us to question the purportedly natural assumptions that women did not figure in the great sagas of power because of their childbearing responsibilities in particular, or their biological destiny—read inferiority—in general. We have now learned not exactly to our surprise, but nonetheless not without pain—that as a rule women were actively excluded from the corridors of power 25 well 28 from the halls of learning. But, however systematic the exclusion of women, the men who launched those activities were not primarily concerned with women at all: men chose to build states and fight wars in ways that may have been misogynist, but essentially, on the most historically significant level, they were primarily concerned with winning wars or building states. They acted as agents of classes and communities and as such, sought to expand the power of the community or class they represented.

This basic recognition of the complexity of human motivation and the interdependence of members of families, members of communities, and of classes themselves, has encouraged historians of working peoples and oppressed ethnic and racial groups to look closely at the social, economic, and ideological bonds that link those with objectively opposed interests. The lines of argument are familiar. For example, working classes in advanced nations have frequently supported the imperialist policies of their leaders or laid down their lives in wars against their working-class brothers of other nations. Working people and oppressed groups have frequently acquiesced, at least to some extent, in ideologies that cast them as inferior members of the collectivity. Some groups of workers have accepted what we might, with the benefit of hindsight, call precarious and short-term economic gains in exchange for the objective weakening of the position of their class within society as a whole. Women committed to

active social roles or to greater sexual freedom for themselves have opposed suffrage. Members of all such groups, including women, have at times sufficiently accepted the hegemony of the dominant ideology to accept its definitions of excellence as models for themselves.

Historians and social theorists have disagreed in their appraisal of such strategies. Not so long ago, it was fashionable in left circles to speak of the false consciousness of the working class. It was equally fashionable among Whig celebrants of the status quo to praise the wise espousal of individual mobility. The dominant tendency in American historiography and social thought has treated such painful compromises with things as they are as functional adaptation. Such funtionalism effectively removes conflict, struggle and necessarily hard choices from historical process: society, like an organism, unfolds with its component members finding their appropriate niches. Except for the proliferation of jargon, it disconcertingly resembles Panglossian optimism or, perhaps, a beneficient utilitarianism.

Functionalism weighs heavily on women's history. For functionalists early paid attention to the reproduction of social values and institutions and to the special importance of the family in society. Fortified by their interests in economics, anthropology and psychology, functionalists willingly acknowledged the importance of family life—and indeed of women's roles—in the stabilization and reproduction of social relations and political cultures. Their thought invited the inclusion of female experience, but it had passed verdict on the meaning of that experience before the work even began. Women naturally fit into familial roles; their activities naturally complement those of their men; they naturally provide a nurturing climate for the inculcation of the young into their preordained adult roles. Furthermore, women's natural familial roles governed their access to the public sphere—to those economic, social. and political roles that naturally accrued to men. 15 To the extent that this line of thought came to dominate family history, it provoked many historians of women to criticize sharply the identification of women and the family as a natural unit of study. In fact, even in Western European and American societies with their unusually high proportions of people never married, most people did spend most of their lives as members of families. And thanks to the inhospitability of the workplace, the constraints of the law, and the informally licensed violence against women who trespassed alone upon the public space, most women did find in the family not merely their principal arena of activity, but the major source of their social identity as well. But this simple association reveals little about the terms upon which women formed families of procreation, the powers they derived from family membership, or the relations between women and men within families. Nor does it reveal the extent to which families themselves were products of historical process explicit political and ideological policies.

¹⁵ The most influential figure here has been Talcott Parsons. In addition to his many works, see Neil J. Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution, London 1959. Functionalism has become deeply ingrained in all modernization theory, as well as in the consensus view of American history. For one critique of the application of modernization theory to women's experience, see June Nash and Helen Icken Safa, (eds.), Sex and Class in Latin America. Wasses's Perspectives on Politics, Economics, and the Family in the Third World, South Hadley, (Mass.) 1980.

Family History Reconsidered

Families are not merely the fundamental unit of community, they are—or have been until very recently—the fundamental units of production and governance. With all our historical sophistication, it remains difficult to shake the model of the family as biological and affective unit of parents and offspring, perhaps augmented or extended by various kin. Yet anthropologists have demonstrated how many forms the family can take, and by now we should recognize that the critical historical development from the Western perspective has been the emergence of political and economic conditions that endowed individual paternity with the control of women and their offspring. ¹⁶

Historians of medieval and early modern Europe, taking paternity for granted, have distinguished between family and household so as to separate out consanguineal and social relations. They have traced the winnowing away of the social chaff from the familial grain. They have especially associated changes in the affective and ideological representation of the family with changes in the socially prescribed role of women and with the new emphasis on motherhood and conjugal intimacy. In this complex and far from unilinear process, the wide variety of family and household forms in which women have participated has not represented a natural extension of an unchanging female role; rather, the family has constituted the primary arena in which gender systems have been reproduced and transformed. In this sense, placing women's history within history forces a substantive reinvestigation of the nature of family relations as gender relations—possibly gender conflict—within the context of social, economic and political relations. ¹⁷

¹⁶ Cf. Sanday, Female Power and Male Dominance, Etienne and Leacock, (ed.), Women and Colonization; Malia Stevens, 'Women, Kinship and Capitalist Development,' in Young, Wolkowitz and McCullagh, (eds.), Of Marriage and the Market; and, for a provocative theoretical discussion, Karen Sacks, Sisters and Wires. The Past and Fature of Second Equality, Westport 1979. Also see Jack Goody, Production and Reproduction, Cambridge 1976 17 Laslett, (ed.), Hombold and Family in Past Time, Peter Laslett, Family Life and Illicit Love m Earlier Generations, Cambridge. 1977, Flandrin, Families in Former Times, Jack Goody, Joan Thirak, and E.P. Thompson, (eds.), Family and Inheritance Rural Security in Western Europe 1200-1800, Cambridge, 1976; Margaret Spufford, Contrasting Communities: English Villages in the Sectional and Seventienth Contures, Cambridge 1974; Miranda Chaytor, Household and Kinship: Ryton in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, History Workshop 10 (Autumn 1980), pp. 25-60, Françoise Zonnabend, La Mémoire Longue, Martine Segulen, Mars et Femme dens la Société Paysanne, Paris 1980. Wolfgang Mager, 'Haushalt und Familie in protoindustrieller Gesellschaft: Spenge (Ravensberg) wahrend der ersten Halfte des 19 Jahr-hunderts - Eine Fallstudie, 'in Neithard Bulst, Joseph Goy und Jochen Hoock, (eds.), Familie Zwitchen Tradition and Moderne, Gottingen 1981, pp. 141-79, Levine, Family Formation; Keith Wrightson and David Levine, Poverty and Puty in an English Village. Terling 1525-1700, New York 1979; Alan Macfarlane, The Origins of English Individualism, Oxford 1978, Hans Medick, 'The Proto-Industrial Family Economy: The Structural Function of Household and Family During the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism,' Social History 3 (1976), pp. 291-313, Lutz Berkner, "The Stem Family and the Development Cycle of the Peasant Household. An 18th-Century Austrian Example,' American Historical Review LXXVII (1972), pp. 398-418, Hans Medick and David Sabean, Tamily and Kinship: Material Interest and Emotion,' Passent Studies 8, No. 2 (1979), pp. 139-60; F. Mendela, La Composition du ménage paysan en France au XIXe stècle. Une analyse économique du mode de production domestique,' Assalus ES.C 33 (1978), pp 780-802; Christopher Clark, "The Household Economy, Market Exchange and the Rise of Capitalism in the Connecticut Valley, 1800-1860', Journal of Social History 13, No. 2 (Winter 1979), pp. 169-90; Rolla Milton Tyron, Houndeld Manufactures in the United States, 1640-1860, New York 1966; Daniel Blake Smith, Mortality and the Family in the Colonial Chesapeake,' Journal of Interdisciplinary History VIII (1978), pp. 403-27; Crandall A.

Just as the model of the natural nuclear family remains difficult to shake. so does the modern model of individualism. Against this standard of individual autonomy and responsibility we tend to weigh the indisputable dependence of women upon the family. A far more useful working assumption is the interdependence of all individuals in all pre-capitalist and most capitalist societies. The medieval peasant family, the Genoan artisan family, the American frontier family, the immigrant working-class family, the black share-cropping family, the modern French peasant family, the urban or rural working-class European family—all required the full participation of all family members. But the terms of participation varied considerably. Many historians, including, for example, Leonore Davidoff, Laura Oren and John Faragher, find significant asymmetry in either the contributions of men and women or the power and status taken to derive from their respective contributions. In short they find systematic oppression of women by men within the family. Others like Joann Vanek claim to find symmetry, albeit with difference, in the contributions of men and women to the domestic economy. Implicitly, Louise Tilly, Joan Scott, Tamara Hareven and others who emphasize the importance of family strategies would seem to agree. 18 In fact, the

Shifflett, The Household Composition of Rural Black Families: Louisa County, Virginia, 1880,' Journal of Interdisciplinary History VI (Autumn 1975, pp. 235-60; Nancy Lou Oberseider, 'A Sociodemographic Study of the Family as a Social Unit in Tidewater, Virgina 1660-1776,' PhD Dissertation, University of Maryland 1975; Philip Greven, Family Structure in Seventeenth Century Andover, Massachusetts,' Wilham and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 23 (1976), pp. 234-36, Lois Green Carr, The Development of the Maryland Orphans' Court, 1654-1715,' in Law, Society, and Politics in Early Maryland, ed., Aubrey C. Land, Lois Green Carr, and Edward C Papenfuse, Baltimore 1977, pp. 41-62; Russell R. Menard, Immigrants and Their Increase: The Process of Population Growth in Early Colonial Maryland, 'in that, pp 88-110, Lorena S. Walsh, 'Servitude and Opportunity in Charles County, Maryland, 1658-1705, in shad, pp. 111-133; Allan Kulikoff, "The Beginnings of the Afro-American Family in Maryland, in and, pp 171-96; Thad W. Tate and David Ammerman, (eds.) The Chesapacks in the Seventionth Century. Essays on Angle-American Society and Politics, Chapel Hill 1979; Irene D. Hecht, "The Virginia Muster of 1624/5 as a Source for Demographic History', William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., XXX, No 1 (January 1973), pp. 65-92; Elizabeth Anne Kuxenesof, 'An Analysis of Household Composition and Headship as Related to Changes in Mode of Production,' Comparative Studies in Society and History 22, No 1 (1980); Harriet Friedmann, 'Household Production and the National Economy: Concepts for the Analysis of Agrarian Formations,' The Journal of Passent Studies 7, No. 1 (January 1980), pp. 158-84, Gavin Wright, The Political Economy of the Cotton South. Homobolds, Markets, and Wealth on the Nineteenth Contury, New York 1978, Teodor Shanin, (ed.), Passants and Passant Sacretus, Harmondsworth 1971; Donald Bender, 'A Refinement of the Concept of Households: Families, Co-residence, and Domestic Functions', American Anthropologist 69, No. 5 (October 1967), pp. 493-504; Rayna Rapp, Ellen Ross, and Renate Bridenthal, Examining Family History, Fearmert Studies 5, No. 1 (1978), Olivia Harris, 'Households as Natural Units,' in Of Marriage and the Market, ed Young, Wolkowitz and McCullagh.

18 Leonore Davidoff, 'Mastered for Life. Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England,' Journal of Social History 7, No. 4 (1974), pp. 406–28; Laura Oren, 'The Welfare of Laboring Families: England, 1860–1950,' in Cho's Consciousness Rassed, ed. Mary Hartman and Lois Banner, New York 1974; John Mack Paragher, Women and Mon on the Overland Trest, New Haven 1979; Julie Roy Jeffrey, Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West 1840–1850, New York 1979; Joann Vanek, 'Work, Leisure and Family Roles: Farm Households in the United States, 1920–55,' Journal of Family History 5 (1980), pp. 422–31; Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, Women, Work and Family, New York 1978; Louise Tilly, 'Structures de l'emploi, travail des femmes et changement démographique dans deux villes industrielles: Amun et Roubarx, 1872–1906,' La Montenant Sociale 105 (1978), pp. 35–58, and her 'The Family Wage Economy in a French Textile City,' Journal of Family History 4, No. 4 (1979), pp. 381–94; Tamara K. Hareven, (ed.), Transitions: The Family and the Life Course in Historical Perspective, New York 1978. See Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Women in the Arts

chances are excellent, that the relative status and power of men and women within families wax and wane according to material conditions and ideological tendencies beyond the immediate control of family members, as well as according to the temperaments of those concerned.

For most of recorded history the family has mediated the economic, social, and political participation of individuals in the larger communities of which their families are part. But this mediation cannot be reduced to some minor adjustments. Dominant classes have normally promoted distinct family policies. The very model of family that we now so take for granted resulted directly from the determination of early modern state-builders to provide themselves with the most governable population possible. To this end, albeit in different ways, both the French and English monarchs promoted the definition of the family as a unit and the special authority of the father within the family. To achieve their ends, they mustered the force of law, emerging police, tax collectors and the public institutions they were attempting to put in place. To drive the lesson home, they long continued to rely upon an explicit patriarchal ideology to justify their own rule. ¹⁹

This early modern patriarchy sought aid and comfort from much older practices and ideologies. But pious self-justifications notwithstanding, it was also attempting to inaugurate a newly comprehensive and ruthless form of government. Its fatherly tentacles sank deeper into the lives of

Micaniques in Sixteenth-Century Lyon,' in Milanges on Hommage de Richard Gascon, ed Jean-Pierre Gutton, Lyon 1979. Cf. also James R. Lehning, The Peasents of Marlbus: Economic Development and Family Organization in Ninetweeth-Contary France, Chapel Hill 1980, Deborah G. White, 'Aint't I A Woman? Female Slaves in the Antebellum South,' PhD Dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle 1979; Noralee Frankel, Workers, Wives, and Mothers: Black Women in Mississippi, 1860-1870,' PhD Dissertation, George Washington University 1982. Implicit functionalism normally accompanies a more or less explicit adherence to modernmation theory and is fully compatible with an emphasis of women's appropriation of their own 'sphere'. See, for example, Nancy Cott, Bonds of Wannesbead. For a critique of the use of modernization theory in women's history, see Richard Evans, 'Modernhation Theory and Women's History,' Archar far Serial perchechte XX (1980) 492-314; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, 'Gender, Class, and Power. Some Theoretical Considerations,' The History Teacher 15, No 2 (February 1982), pp. 255-76, and my Women and Work. A Preliminary Contribution to the Terms of the Discussion,' Fernand Braudel Center, Working Papers, Seminar I: 'Group Formation and Group Conflict in the Historical Development of the Modern World System' (March 1981). For more complex uses of the notion of family strategy, see Pierre Bourdieu, 'Marriage Strategies as Strategies of Social Reproduction, in Family and Society, ed. Forster and Ranum, and his Outline of a Theory of Practice, Cambridge 1977; David Levine, Family Formation

19 Among many, Ronald Trumbach, The Rise of the Egehterien Family. Aristocratic Kinchep. and Donestic Rolations in Eighteenth-Contury England, New York 1978; James Trace, Marriage and the Family in Eighteenth-Century France, Ithaca & London, 1980, and his From Reform to Revolution The Critical Century in the Development of the French Legal System,' Journal of Modern Hutery 49, No. 1 (1977), pp. 73-88, Ralph Giesey, Rules of Inheritance and Strategies of Mobility in Prerevolutionary France,' American Huterical Review 82, No. 2 (1977), pp. 271-89; James K. Sommerville, 'The Salem (Mass) Woman in the Home, 1660-1770,' Eighteauth Century Life I, No. 1 (1974), pp. 7-10; Janelle Greenberg, 'The Legal Status of Women in Early Eighteenth-Century Common Law and Equity,' Studies in Elighteenth-Contary Culture IV (1975), pp. 171-82, Eleanor Searle, Merchet in Medieval England,' Past and Present \$2 (1979) 3-43; Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, 'A System of Customary Law Family Structures and Inheritance Customs in Sixteenth-Century France', in Family and Society, ed Forster and Ramum, Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage; Jacques Lafon, Las Époco: Bordolais 1450-1550, Paris 1972, Mervyn James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society: A Study in the Society, Politics and Montality of the Dirbam Region, Oxford, 1974.

disparate communities than tradition would ever have countenanced. To the men, the fathers of families whom it drew into its network, it offered the recompense of genuine rule over the women of their own families. But this new domestication of women came apace with important, and frequently brutal, transformation of class relations, with the preparation of a traditional aristocracy for the responsibilities of capitalist agriculture, capital accumulation and rational self-governance.²⁰

The patriarchal monarchs did their job too well. The classes they schooled in the discipline of rational governance rapidly decided to dispense with the nominal father and assume responsibility themselves. The succession of bourgeois revolutions dismantled patriarchy in government—and frequently beheaded patriarchal monarchs to bring the lesson home. As I have argued elsewhere, the theoretical justifications for this new interpretation of sovereignty as the emanation of the individual and his absolute property rights took a necessary detour through familial relations, positing the equality of man and wife within the family as the logical foundation for individual autonomy and representative government. The customs of the country, not to mention economic transformation, militated against women realizing this theoretical equality in practice. In fact, the repudiation of legally sanctioned, hierarchical class distinctions cost more than a few aristocratic women the luxury of dabbling in court politics. The consolidation of capitalism, succeeded by the rationalization of economic relations and eventually industrialization, complemented the political developments in gradually circumscribing their participation in all so-called public activities. The public defeat of patriarchy, its repudiation as a viable model of relations between men, left men, if anything, a freer hand to rule their women at home. The father-king is dead, long live the father.21

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21 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, 'Property and Patriarchy in Classical Bourgeois Political Theory,' Rudical History Resear IV, Nos. 2-3 (Spring-Summer, 1977), pp. 36-59 Zillah Eisenstein develops similar ideas in The Rudical Future of Liberal Fermitim. Cf. Elahrain, Public Man, Private Women, and R. W. K. Hinton, 'Husbands, Fathers and Conquerers I,' Political Studies 15 (1967), pp. 291-300, and 'Husbands, Fathers and Conquerers II,' Political Studies 16 (1968), pp. 36-67 See also Richard Allen Chapman, 'Leviathan Writ Small. Thomas Hobbes on the Family,' American Political Science Review 69 (March 1975), pp. 76-90, and Mary Lyndon Shanley, 'Marriage Contract and Social Contract in Seventeenth Century English Political Thought,' Waters Political Quarterly 32 (March 1979), pp. 79-91.

²⁰ Gordon Schochet, Patriarchalism in Political Thought. The Authoritarian Family and Political Speculation and Attitudes Especially in Seventeenth-Contary England, New York 1975, Robert Mandrou, Magistrats et Serciers en France au XVII e Seicle, Paris 1968; Jean Bodin, The Six Bookes of a Commonweale, Cambridge (Mass.) 1962, Julian H. Franklin, Jose Bodin and the Rus of Absolutut Theory, Cambridge 1973, Peter Laulett, (ed.), Patriarchia and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer, Oxford 1949. See also, Pashal Larkin, Property in the 18th Century, with Special Reference to England and Locks, Cork 1930; Richard Schatter, Property: the History of an Idea, London 1951; C.B. MacPherson, The Theory of Passessive Individualism from Hobbes to Locks, Oxford 1962; Michael Walzer, The Revolution of the Saints, New York 1973 Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision (Boston 1970) holds that politics ends with Locke. Cf. Marcel Garaud, La Rivolution et la Propriété Foncière, Paris 1959; Marcel Garaud & Romuald Szramkiewicz, La Rholiston Française et al Famille, Paris, 1978, J. Portmer, 'Le Statut de la femme en France depuis la réformation des coutumes jusqu'à la rédaction du Code civil,' Rocueil Joan Bodin XII, Brussels 1962, pp 447-497, and 'La femme dans la législation royale des deux derniers siècles de l'Ancien Régime, Méllengus Patat, Paris 1959, pp 441-454; L Abensour, La Femme et le Fémmisme avant la Révelution, Paris 1923; Barbar Boons Diefendorf, 'Marriage and Patrimony in Sixteenth-Century France: The Families of the Paris City Councillors, 1535-1575,' PhD Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley

III. Women in the Age of Capital

Much recent work in social history and the history of women has clustered around the transition to capitalism and the great bourgeois political revolutions also variously described as industrialization, urbanization and modernization. Throughout this work runs a steady debate about the improvement or deterioration wrought by these changes in the lives of women and working people. As yet we have little work of a comparative nature and little that links the political to the socio-economic changes. But even the most cursory reading of the evidence reveals the disconcerting paradox that the ostensibly great political and economic advances frequently trailed apparent or real losses for both women and workers. Perhaps the questions that centre on better or worse, on loss or gain, may not be properly cast. The new work is none the less furnishing the materials that will begin to permit us to think about social systems in a more comprehensive fashion and to recognize the gender system and the division of labour by sex-in all their permutations of class and race—as central to any social system.

The contribution of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions to the social and political individualism of women requires special mention. The bourgeois-democratic revolutions cannot be fully understood independent of the capitalist social relations they consolidated. Like the ideology of bourgeois individualism, capitalism—and especially industrial capitalism—potentially offered a much greater measure of independence and of equality with men than had previous class relations. Yet, many historians of women, like many historians of working people, have been led, by their opposition to the inequities of capitalism in practice, to romanticize life in precapitalist—and especially preindustrial—societies. This romanticization has been marvellously encouraged by the sanctimonious and complacent hypocrisy of those who preach the upward and onward virtues of modernization and the triumph of the middle classes. Both sides of this heated debate tend to ignore the decisive implications of structural transformation. With respect to women, both capitalism and bourgeois ideology profoundly altered the nature of male dominance. Neither abolished it, and, in the short run, both may have intensified it, at least with respect to particular groups of women.

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However complex the issues, it is essential to recognize that pre-bour-geois societies systematically favoured the subordination of women to men and the exclusion of women, as individuals, from public power, whereas bourgeois society offered women not merely a new model of individualism, but previously unimaginable possibilities for practical equality with men. Science, technology, and medicine increasingly reduced the physiological differences between men's and women's contributions to socially necessary labour to insignificance. Machines permitted women to do much the same work as men. Medical advances decreased the risk of death in childbirth and the risk of infant death, thereby decreasing the number of children a woman needed to bear to contribute to reproduction. The spread of contraceptive devices permitted women to limit their pregnancies without renouncing or curtailing their sexual relations. Urbanization offered women the possibility of

surviving independent of a family or household. Modern schooling increasingly offered them access to literacy.

Despite, or perhaps because of, their potential contributions to female independence and equality, bourgeois ideology and capitalist social relations both raised massive barriers to female individualism. Both marshalled a formidable combination of custom and modern science to justify women's subordination; both invited the alliance of men across class lines to sustain it. New denigrations of female nature, like new celebrations of female needs for protection, informed the theory and practice of excluding women from full social and political participation. Over time many of these barriers fell before the determined struggles of women on their own behalf. Withal, the legacy of exclusion is so deeply embedded in our political, social and economic relations that women as a group look ever more like an oppressed and exploited economic class. It is reasonable to doubt that the advanced capitalist nations could now provide economic equality for their female populations, but their inability to do so results from their economic structure—from capital's need to extract surplus value—not from any necessary logic of the ideology of individualism. It should, however, make us thoughtful that, logic and promise notwithstanding, capitalism has derived such profit from the oppression of women. In practice, its special forms of male dominance helped to produce and reproduce those class relations which have served it so well.

The Bourgeois Construction of Gender

The term 'patriarchy' has plagued all attempts to describe the persistence of male dominance over women and children. It cannot fruitfully be extended beyond its specific historical manifestations. Simply to identify the rule of the father with paternal dominance within discrete families or households abstracts from the social and political relations that constitute different societies. Patriarchy is not merely a relation between men and women, but one between men and other men. And patriarchy evokes not merely the practices of domination, but their representation and legitimation as well. The norms of a patriarchal society in which sovereignty and authority are taken to derive from the innate rights of fathers and society as a whole is represented as a familial organization are in fundamental contradiction to those of a bourgeois society which prides itself on its rationalism and individualism—at least for its fully participating male members. Innumerable variations and gradations separate pure patriarchy from pure individualism. The early bourgeois societies sought to retain as many patriarchal vestiges as possible, at least with respect to the control of women and labour. They also cherished pious patriarchal metaphors to validate a domination increasingly divorced from patriarchal institutions. For the practice and ideology of absolute property and of citizenship were fundamentally at variance with those of traditional hierarchy and patriarchy. Even the modern slave system of the American South departed from traditional patriarchy in its special combination of outright ownership of labour with a new paternalistic ideology. In seigneurial systems, serfs were not owned and their servile status, transmitted by the father, not the mother, provided a safety valve against identifying their condition either with a thing that is

owned or with an innate, biological destiny. And, as Linda Kerber has demonstrated, when American males consolidated their vision of individual autonomy in the concept of citizenship, they felt obliged to formulate a complementary concept of Republican motherhood rather than to rely upon older patriarchal notions of hierarchical dominance. As these examples and many others demonstrate, a distinctive bourgeois paternalism indisputably persisted in a variety of forms in all capitalist societies, and bourgeois law brought incalculable assistance to men's domination over their women. But we obscure more than we clarify in equating this paternalism and this dominance with patriarchy proper, as we do by conflating the forms of paternalism and dominance experienced by women in different countries and of different classes and races. ²²

Male assault upon formal patriarchy was usually accompanied by the elaboration of an explicit ideology of separate spheres. Much ink has flowed in recent years over the appropriateness of separate spheres as an accurate description of the sexual division of labour in bourgeois societies. Yet there is no doubt that the concept figured significantly in the self-representations of bourgeois societies. The problem lies not in the emergence of the ideology, but in the confidence that the representations and exhortatory prescriptions mirrored practice. Lower-class women assuredly did not have access to the material security that would have permitted the full cultivation of true womanhood and full-time motherhood that the literature advised. Even for well-to-do women, the removal of productive labour from the household was a long drawn-out process. The cleavage between home and market remained less than perfect. Changing patterns of work, consumption, lessure—like changing notions of time, the work ethic and individual identity—bound the two as much as they differentiated them. It remains, none the less, beyond dispute that the idea of separate spheres, however complex the reality. enjoyed important ideological status. It designated roles and invited their acceptance; it helped to legitimate the economic dependence of women upon men and the exclusion of women from the expanding worlds of politics, business, the professions and organized labour, it proposed a model of womanhood that paradoxically permitted a greater licence in

²² Linda K. Kerber, Wanns of the Republic, Chapel Hill 1980; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, The Fruits of Morthaut Capital, New York & Oxford 1982 (forthcoming), especially Chapter 11, "The Ideological Bases of Domestic Economy," and Chapter 5, 'Poor Richard at Work in the Cotton Fields: A Critique of the Psychological and Ideological Presuppositions of Time on the Creat, Marylynn Salmon, 'Equality or Submersion?, in Women of America, ed. Carol Berkin and Mary Beth Norton, Boston 1979, and her 'Life, Liberty and Power': The Legal Status of Women after the American Revolution', in Women, War and Revolution, ed. Berkin and Lovett; Eugene D Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll (New York 1975) uses both paternalism and patmarchy in referring to the alayeholders, usually paternalism for their relations with their slaves and patriarchy for their relations with their own women. Large plantations included productive and domestic life within a single sphere and the slave-holder presided over it all, with no significant checks to his will except the resistance of slaves and women. But even the largest plantations were embedded within a democratic system and even the wealthiest and most powerful planters engaged in democratic, rather than hierarchical relations with the other male members of their society. In this respect, as in so many others, the slave society of the American South constituted a hybrid society. This society may have fostered the persistence of what we might call domestic patriarchy, but it was not a full patriarchal society because of the nature of the relations among white men. This is not the place to resolve the question of terminology, but antebellum Southern society does constitute an important litmus test of the varieties of male dominance

the exploitation of women who did not enjoy freedom from labour-force participation; it cast a veil over the contradictions that divided women by race and class, and it afforded even privileged women no access to the experience of authoritative selfhood that for men was embodied in the notions of property, work and political responsibility.²³

The concept of separate spheres has deep roots in the gender differentiation at the core of all world-views and social formations. Bourgeois society cannot, in this respect, be credited with inventing separate spheres, but it can be credited with promoting and generalizing the ideology of separate spheres as the custodian of displaced notions of hierarchy. It thus disembedded—to borrow, by analogy, from Karl Polanyi's discussion of the capitalist market²⁴—gender difference. Where traditionally this difference had figured in all explanations of the world as it is, the very fact of difference became an ideological justification for collective male and class dominance in a society that claimed to draw its identity from the freedom of individuals. The pervasive division of labour by sex cut across class lines, which were increasingly subordinated to it, at least in official ideology. And since the division of labour by sex was taken to be a natural extension of gender identity, it tended to become wholly identified with the gender system that itself came to absorb older notions of hierarchy and dependence. In this respect, the representations

The dominant tendency in women's history has largely ignored the experience of black women, but see, Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, The Afre-American Women Straggles and Images, Port Washington (N.Y.) 1978; Angela Davis, Wassen, Race and Class, New York 1982, Alfred M. Duster, (ed.), Crusade for Justice The Autobiography of Ida B. Walls, Chicago 1970; Anna Julia Cooper, A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South (1892) repr. New York 1969, Bonnie Thornton Dill, "The Dialectics of Black Womanhood," Signs IV, No. 3 (Spring 1979), pp. 543-55, Bell Hooks, Am't I a Woman Black Women and Feminism, Boston, 1981; Joyce A. Ladner, Tomorrow's Tomorrow, Garden City 1972, Gerda Lemer, (ed), Black Women in White America A Documentary History, New York, 1963, and her 'Early Community Work of Black Club Women,' Journal of Nagro History 59 (April 1974), pp. 158-67; Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin, (eds.), Black Women in Nuneteenth-Century American Life. Their Words Their Thoughts. Their Feelings, University Park (Pa) 1976; White, 'Am't I A Woman'; Frankel, 'Workers, Wives, and Mothers'; Catherine Davis Tilman, 'Afro American Women and their Work,' The A.M. E. Church Revest 11, No. 4 (April 1895), pp. 477-95. The dissertation in progress of Evelyn Brooks Barnett (University of Rochester) will address the ideology of separate spheres in the thought and practice of black women in the second half of the nineteenth century ²⁴ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, New York 1944.

²³ Leonore Davidoff, The Best Circles, and her "The Separation of Home and Work. Landladies and Lodgers in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century England', in Fit Work for Women, ed. Sandra Burman, New York, 1979, Barbara Welter, Dunty Connections, New York 1976, especially chapters 1 and 2; Sklar, Catherine Beecher, Mary Ryan, 'A Women's Awakening: Evangelical Religion and the Families of Utics, N.Y., 1800-1840,' American Quarterly 30 (1978), pp. 602-23, her Fernininity and Capitalism in Antebellum America,' in Capitalist Patriarchy, ed. Eisenstein, and her The Cradle of the Modelle Class The Family in Onesda County, New York, 1790-1865, Cambridge 1981; Gerda Lerner, 'The Lady and the Mill Girl,' in her Majority Fiels its Past; Catherine Hall, "The Barly Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideolology,' in Fit Work for Wasses, ed. Burman; Neil McKendrick, 'Home Demand and Economic Growth; A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution,' in Historical Perspectives. Studies in English Thought and Society in Honour of J. H. Planeb, London 1974, Barbara Corrado Pope, Revolution and Retreat: Upper Class French Women after 1789,' in Women, War and Revolution, ed. Berkin and Lovett, Leonore Davidoff, Jean L'Esperance and Howard Newby, 'Landscape with Figures: Home and Community in English Society', in Rights and Wrongs, ed. Mitchell and Oakley. Raymond Williams, The Country and the City (New York 1973) argues cogently that the vision of the country as a retreat from capitalism was nothing but a myth. The same is true for the home.

of gender difference came to dominate the most fundamental representations of social order. In particular, it came at once to shape and be embedded in even the most scientific analyses of social and economic life.

Elizabeth Fee, Charles Rosenberg, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Yvonne Knibiehler and others have demonstrated that the anthropological and medical views of women arose as a product of larger ideological projects. The discourse on female nature can be traced to the origins of modern anthropological and medical thought, but it attained maximum coherence and scientific hegemony towards the end of the nineteenth century, at about the same time as did the parallel discourse on innate racial characteristics. From the perspective of political science, Susan Moller Okin has recently argued for the persistence of a functional view of women in political thought. Her provocative work none the less eschews the specific historical development of political and social thought and thus tends to slight the very special discourse about women that can be shown to pervade all modern political and social theory. 25

Reproductive Strategies and Class Struggle

The formidable role of economic discourse in shaping the perceptions and practice of modern gender relations requires special mention. The science of economics, with its roots in Political Arithmetik and Political Economy, came of age with the extension of the capitalist mode of production. From the outset, it provided the formal analysis of capitalism, the scientific self-consciousness of capital and the social relations of production and reproduction it engendered. Understandably it tended to exercise its calculations upon those activities and relations which lent themselves to calculation, especially the surplus produced by domestic units or the non-domestic buying and selling of labour. For centuries such market activities had been the marginal by-products of the reproduction of the mass of agricultural society. The triumph of the capitalist mode of production generalized and systematized these marginal activities. Between the twin poles of absolute property and the buying and selling of labour-power, much of the fundamental economic life of society came under the aegis of market exchange and became an integral part of the accumulation of capital. Hence, it became customary to speak of market activity as productive. But the human participants in the process no doubt saw it differently. Specifically, the labour of

²⁵ Elmabeth Fee, 'Science and the Woman Problem. Historical Perspectives,' in Michael S. Teitelbaum, ed., Sex Differences. Social and Biological Perspectives, Garden City 1976, pp. 175-223; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Woman and Her Role in Nineteenth-Century America,' Journal of American History 60 (Sept. 1973), pp 332-16, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America,' Social Research 39 (Winter 1972), pp. 652-78; Yvonne Knibsehler, La Nature Féminine au Temps du Code Civil, Annales E.S.C. 31, No. 4 (July-August 1976), pp 824-45, Sarah Kofman, Aberrations La Descuir-Femme d'Angeste Comte, Paris 1978; Susan Moller Okin, Women in Western Political Thought, Princeton 1979. Cf. Umberto Cerroni, Il Rapporte Usare-Douns Nella Civilità Borghess, Rome 1976; Lorenne M. G. Clark and Lydia Lange, (eds.), The Section of Social and Political Theory Wesses and Reproduction from Plate to Nutzucke, Toronto 1979, Elizabethan H. Wolgast, Equality and the Rights of Women, Ithaca & London 1980 For a general view of many of these questions, see the recent special issue of Signs, separately published as, Catharine R. Sumpson and Ethel Spector Person, (eds.), Wassest Sex and Sexuality, Chicago 1980

women—although not only of women—was consistently classified as non-productive if it did not command a wage: the grinding expenditure of human energy and the usefulness of its products had nothing to do with the issue. The critical transformation occurred not so much from reproduction to production, or from subsistence to market, but rather from the transformation of the components of reproduction or subsistence into commodities. It was thus the source of reproduction or subsistence that changed. The wage gradually replaced the peasant holding or the individual shop as the cornerstone of reproduction. Only from the perspective of capital can wage-labour be called productive, and only because it generates exchange-value and surplus-value, not because of the inherent quality of its products. There is no criterion other than the participation in exchange-value and the production of surplus-value that would justify calling the labour that produces the loaf of Wonder Bread productive and that which produces a homemade loaf unproductive. The cultural and psychological by-products of this process include the sentimentalization of the homemade loaf and the attendant pressure on women to continue producing use-values in order to demonstrate their womanly qualities.

It is a measure of the success of capitalism as a world view that its preferred distinctions between production and reproduction, subsistence and market, public and private, acquired such hegemony. It is a measure of the success of capitalism as a social system that so many political and economic institutions enforced these distinctions. For women, their relative exclusion from this process of commodification went hand-inglove with their exclusion from full individualism. Only with the generalization of the capitalist mode of production did the purportedly natural relation between the family, as mediator of exchange- and use-values, and capital take shape.

Initially, women played a rather more important role in early industrial activity than has commonly been acknowledged. We have come to know a good deal about the migration of whole families into the mills. Only with the advent of a more mature industrial system were the respective patterns of labour-force participation for women and men sharply differentiated. This pattern reflects the wholesale transfer of the agricultural family unit to an industrial setting and its subsequent restructuring. It also presupposes the prior dislocation of the family from its agricultural holding. In other patterns, for example in France, the United States, and even Japan, agricultural families retained a hold on their agricultural moorings long after the family farm could support all of its members. Under these conditions, as Thomas Dublin has argued for the Lowell mill girls, unmarried daughters would likely be the most disposable members of the family work-force. Daughters, then, along with other indigent single women who risked becoming a charge on public resources, migrated or were assigned to labour in the new mills and factories. From the perspective of the rural division of labour by sex, they were following their gender-appropriate task of spinning (or, later, as in Marlhes, ribbon making) into the new place of work. From the perspective of employers, they seemed to promise a docile and tractable labour force. Thus the early accommodation of the family to nascent industrial capitalism was to be found in precisely that labour force participation of women upon which both capitalists and workers would frown.²⁶ As factory work and wage-labour moved from a marginal or supplementary contribution to the livelihoods of increasing numbers of working people to their foundation, the wage-labour of working-class women was increasingly governed by the norms of the dominant culture, reinforced by the gender-specific structure of industrial capitalism. It took generations for the working class—and then only its dominant section—to establish its right to a male wage that would afford a viable family subsistence. Until that time, all members of the working-class family contributed to family income, although they tried their best to avoid the direct labour-force participation of married women.²⁷

It has become common to ascribe the general absence of married women from the labour force to one or another family strategy. The arguments about the persistence of traditional values, childbearing and the need for the mother at home are familiar. We now also know, thanks to the work of Heidi Hartman, Claudia Goldin and others, that the workplace did not encourage female participation on equal terms with men or reward consistent labour-force participation with long-term increases in wages. Labour market segmentation reinforced, if it did not directly contribute to, working people's adherence to the standards of the ideology of separate spheres. Workers and bosses, however sharp their differences on other matters, concurred in discouraging the employment of married women: at least women at home spared class struggles over the control of women and their time. Yet those black women studied by Elizabeth Pleck apparently chose the role of working mother in order to free at least some of their children for education in the interests of advancement in the next generation. 28

²⁶ Thomas Duhlm, Wasses at Work, New York 1980, Bettina Elleen Berch, Industrialization and Working Women in the Nineteenth Century England, France, and the United States,' PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison 1976; Shelby T. McCloy, 'Charity Workshops for Women, Parls, 1790–95,' The Social Service Resear XI (1937), pp. 274–84, Yvonne Forado-Cunco, 'Les Arteliers de Charité de Paris pendant la Révolution Française 1789–1791,' La Révolution Française 16 (1933), pp. 317–42; Gary B. Nash, "The Failure of Female Factory Labor in Colonial Boston,' Labor History (1975), Mark Selden, 'The Proletanat, Revolutionary Change and the State in China and Japan, 1850–1950,' Fernand Braudel Center, Working Papers, Seminar I (February 1981), Lehning, Possessis of Maribes

²⁷ See, among many, Tilly and Scott, Wasses, Work and Family, Michael, R. Haines, Industrial Work and the Family Life Cycle, 1889–1890, Remerch in Economic History 4 (1980); Michael Anderson, Family Structure in Numberath-Contray Lencasters, Cambridge 1971, Frances Collier, The Family Economy of the Working Classis in the Cotton Industry 1784–1833, Manchester 1964, Lawrence A Glasco, The Life Cycles and Household Structure of American Ethnic Groups: Irish, Germana, and Native-born Whites in Buffalo, New York, 1855, Journal of Urban History 1 (1975), pp. 339–64; Daniel J. Walkowitz, Worker City, Company Town. Iron and Caston-Worker Protest in Tray and Cobest, New York, 1855–84, Urbana 1981, Bruce Laurie, Working People of Philadelphia, 1800–1830, Philadelphia 1980, pp. 11–12, Clyde and Sally Griffen, Natives and Naucamers. The Ordering of Opportunity in Mid-Nautensth-Contray Posphiselphia, Cambridge (Mass.) 1978, pp. 128–34; Yans-McLaughlin, Faurily and Community, Jacob Mincer, 'Labor Force Participation of Married Women,' in Universities-National Bureau Committee for Economic Research, Asports of Labor Economic.

²⁸ Heidi Hariman, 'Capitaliam, Pairlarchy and Job Segregation by Sex,' Signt I, No. 3, pt. 2 (1976), pp. 137-69, her "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxiam and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union,' Capital and Clair (1979), and her "The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class and Political Struggle: The Example of Housework,' Signt 6, No. 3 (Spring 1981); Claudia Goldin, 'Female Labor Force Participation: The Origin of Black and White Differences, 1870 and 1880,' Journal of Economic History 37 (March 1977), pp. 87-108, and her

The dominant patterns, in short, were neither necessary nor inherently functional. They represented a specific compromise between antagonistic classes at a specific historical moment. The experience of the working class and, hence, the reproductive strategies it adopted were structured by the development of capitalism as a mode of production. And, to the extent that a powerful association emerged between women, the domestic sphere, use-values and traditional values, that association itself was a product of capitalism, not a hold-over from an earlier social order. But the consequences of this compromise still weigh upon women's access to economic equality with men. And the identification of separate spheres with the economic metaphors of production and reproduction as well as with the means by which economic value is calculated reaches to the centre of our collective perceptions and values, including our historical theories.

The Challenge of Women's History

We have learned much about women's social participation. Their labour, normally relegated to the category of use values, permitted the operation of farms, the survival of working-class families and the forging of community institutions. Long before they received the vote, women joined actively in the political life of their communities and nations. They participated in strikes or supported strikers. They organized reform groups, circulated petitions, pressured politicians and legislatures, organized for suffrage and against lynching, campaigned for peace movements, labour legislation reform, and educational reform, and fought for temperance. Their charitable, missionary and club activities all carried political implications. Frequently working specifically for themselves and other women, they always worked for specific classes, communities, ethnic and racial groups or nations. The world we have inherited could not have been built without them, neither the bad in that world nor the good. They worked for all contending parties for the Klan as well as against lynching.

Women's history demonstrates the relation of the officially powerless to the success of the powerful, but the contributions of women have not been much valued.²⁹ And there is a bitter irony in that commonplace

[&]quot;The Work and Wages of Single Women, 1870 to 1920," NBER Working Paper Series, No. 375 (1979), Edwards, Resch, Gordon, (eds.), Labor Market Segmentation, Martha Blaxell and Barbara Reagan, (eds.), Women and the Workplace: The Implications of Occupational Segregation, Chicago 1976, Valente Kincade Oppenheimer, The Female Labor Force in the United States. Demographic and Economic Factors Governing its Growth and Changing Composition, Berkeley 1970; Elyce Jean Rotella, 'Women's Labor Force Participation and the Growth of Clencal Employment in the United States, 1870-1930,' PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania 1977; Cindy Aron, 'To Barter Their Souls for Gold: Female Clerks in Federal Government Offices, 1862-1890,' Journal of Asservan Hutory 67, No. 4 (March 1981), Barbara Klaczynska, 'Why Women Work: A Comparison of Various Groups-Philadelphia, 1910-1930,' Labor History XVII (Winter 1976), Margery Davies, 'A Woman's Place is at the Typewriter,' Radical America 8 (July-August 1974); Susan J. Kleinberg, "Technology's Stepdaughters. The Impact of Industrialization upon Working Class Women, Pittisburgh, PhD Dissertation, University of Pittisburgh 1973; Elizabeth Pleck, A Mother's Wages Income Earning Among Married Italian and Black Women, 1869-1911,' in The American Family in Some-Historical Perspective, ed. Michael Gordon, and ed., New York 1978, and her "The Two Parent Household. Black Family Structure in Late Nineteenth Century Boston,' Journal of Social History 6 (Fall 1972). Also see Katzman, Seven Days a Wook. 29 Elizabeth Janeway, The Pewers of the Wask, New York 1980

observation. For in truth, the undervaluation of women has not only led to the slighting of women's participation in slave revolts, *jacquaries*, strikes and revolutions; it has also led to the slighting of their formidable contribution to the building of slave societies, the suppression of *jacquaries*, the consolidation of big business and the efforts at counterrevolution. Women did develop discrete values, frequently in conflict with those of the men of their own group and frequently in common with specific sensibilities of women of other groups. But the foundations of female values and self-consciousness lay in the tension between their exclusion from the public worlds of exchange-value and political power and the values they had developed within the interstices of the male-dominated world. The prevailing myth of woman-as-Other would encourage us to lump the wide range of women's experiences under the oppression of womanhood. But if we have learned anything, it must be that we must uncover the history of women in all its tragic complexity.

The history we know has been written primarily from the perspective of the authoritative male subject—the single, triumphant consciousness. Much history has, in fact, rested upon the determination to deny ambiguity, conflict and uncertainty. It has served to provide worthy pedigrees for individuals, rising classes, nations, cultures and ideologies. Whatever their differences, women share the experience of having been denied access to an authoritative self as women. The twoness of which DuBois wrote permeates women's experience. In this sense, women's history challenges mainstream history not to substitute the chronicle of the female subject for that of the male, but rather to restore conflict, ambiguity and tragedy to the centre of historical process: to explore the varied and unequal terms upon which genders, classes and races participate in the forging of a common destiny.



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The American Road to Capitalism

This essay is an attempt to examine the theoretical and historiographic debates on the development of capitalism in the United States between 1790 and 1877. The realization of the necessary conditions for capitalist production in the United States took place through the articulation, expanded reproduction and transformation of three forms of production, and through a process of political class struggle that culminated in the Civil War. Each of these forms of production—slavery, petty-commodity production and capitalist manufacture—has been the subject of theoretical and historiographic controversy. These debates will be reviewed in order to determine the place of each productive form in the development of us capitalism. The Civil War's place in the history of us capitalist development has also been the subject of well-known controversy; these discussions will be scrutinized to determine how the class struggle that culminated in the War affected capitalist development in the United States.

I. Plantation Slavery

The overall question of the relationship between plantation slavery as a social system and the development of American capitalism must be apprehended, first of all, through a survey of discrete historiographic debates on slavery's profitability, its relations of production, its impact on the South's social division of labour and industrialization, and its contribution to the total volume of commodity circulation within the boundaries of the antebellum United States. Only through a careful examination of the empirical and theoretical issues posed by each of these debates can we ultimately arbitrate in what manner slavery was either an obstacle or spur to the process of national capitalist development.

The question of slavery's profitability was initially raised in 1905 with the publication of U. B. Phillips's article, 'The Economic Costs of Slaveholding in the Cotton Belt'. Arguing on the basis of price series for cotton and prime male fieldhands, Phillips claimed that plantation production was an increasingly unprofitable investment in the antebellum period. and that the only profits gained from slave-owning were derived from the speculative purchase and sale of the slaves themselves. Phillips's thesis remained the orthodox view of the subject for over fifty years until it was contested by Conrad and Meyer in 1955.2 Utilizing the more sophisticated statistical tools of neo-classical economics, Conrad and Meyer asserted that slavery was actually a comparatively profitable investment compared with other sectors of the antebellum economy. While technical questions concerning the exact rate of return on plantation investments remain unanswered,3 it is clear that slave production of cotton was a profitable investment prior to 1860. However the implications of this profitability for the social character of slavery remain open to question.

On the basis of further research into the profitability of slavery, two economic historians, Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, have claimed that Southern plantation slavery was a capitalist form of commodity production, governed by profit-maximization and characterized by the efficient allocation of factors of production. Leaving aside the massive critical literature on Fogel and Engerman's 'cliometric' techniques and use of evidence, we must consider the theoretical implications of the attempt to build a concept of capitalist production on the basis of profit maximization and commodity production. Fogel and Engerman are not alone in conceiving of American plantation slavery as a capitalist form of production. A number of writers from outside the tradition of the 'new economic history', including Lewis Gray, Louis Hacker and Immanuel

2 Alfred H Conned and John R. Meyer, "The Economics of Slavery in the Antebellum South', in ibid.

⁴ Fogel and Engerman, pp. 67-78.

¹ Reprinted in G. D. Nash (ed.), *Junus is American Economic History*, Boston 1964

³ Most of the contributions to the debate are reprinted in H. Aitkin (ed.), Dol Slavery Payl, Boston 1971. Cf. also Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, Time on the Crass. The Economics of American Negro Slavery, Boston 1974, and Gavin Wright, The Political Economy of the Cotton South, New York 1978

⁵ Cf. Paul A. David, et al., Rechange with Slavery, New York 1976, and Herbert Gutman, Slavery and the Numbers Gauss. A Critique of Time on the Crass', Urbana 1975.

Wallerstein, have characterized plantation slavery in the American South as a variant of capitalist production on the basis of its commodity producing and profit-maximizing character. While Wallerstein's 'world-systemic' perspective allows us to grasp the relationship of us slavery to the development of industrial capitalism in England, and in other parts of the emergent capitalist world economy, the notion that slavery is a variant of capitalist production tends to obscure the specificity of slave and capitalist relations of surplus appropriation and their effects on the dynamics of their respective labour processes.

Fogel and Engerman's arguments concerning the capitalist character of plantation slavery bring out the problems with this conception most clearly. Fogel and Engerman locate the source of plantation slavery's profitability in the high quality and productivity of black slave labour, which combined with the plantation's factor combination, made the Southern plantation equally or more efficient and productive than other forms of agriculture in the antebellum period. The source of this high quality, efficient and productive black labour under slavery was the internalization by the slave population, through numerous non-coercive incentives offered by the planters, of the 'Protestant work ethic' of the master class.7 Fogel and Engerman's claims concerning the nature of labour productivity and the determinations of plantation profits are contradicted by both their own evidence and recent research. Gavin Wright⁸ has convincingly argued that the source of the cotton plantations' profitability was neither the high productivity of slave labour, nor economies of scale achieved under the plantation regime, but the demand for raw cotton by industrial capitalists in England, and the complete domination of the world market for raw cotton by the plantations of the American South This produced continually high prices for raw cotton prior to the Civil War, which bouyed up the planters' profits.

In Time on the Cross we are presented with a detailed description of the labour-process under slavery, which is purported to be highly efficient and productive. However when one scrutinizes Fogel and Engerman's description of the plantation labour-process, one finds that it is characterized by gang-labour and the production and appropriation of absolute surplus-labour. The labour-process under slavery was organized to maximize the use of human labour in large, co-ordinated groups under the continual supervision of overseers and drivers. The instruments of production used were simple and virtually unchanged during the antebellum period. Such a labour-process leaves only a few options to the planter seeking to increase labout productivity: increasing the pace of work, increasing the amount of acreage each slave or slave-gang cultivated, or moving the plantation to more fertile soil. These methods

⁶ Lewis C. Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860, New York 1933, p 302 ff, Louis M. Hacker, The Triumph of American Capitalism, New York 1947, pp. 280-320; and Immanuel Wallerstein, 'American Slavery and the Capitalist World Economy', American Journal of Sociology 81, 5 (March 1976)

⁷ Fogel and Engerman, pp 38-43, 144-57, 209-23. For a detailed criticism of their data on incentives and coercion in the plantation labour process, see Gutman, pp 14-87.

Wright, pp. 90-106, 176-84

⁹ Fogel and Engerman, pp. 203-06.

of increasing labour productivity expanded absolutely the amount of surplus labour performed by the direct producers, while leaving the amount of necessary labour performed constant. This stands in sharp contrast to the capitalist organization of the labour-process, where labour productivity is increased by the continual introduction of new instruments of production which reduce the amount of necessary labour performed in relation to surplus labour.

Genovese and the 'Irrationality' of Slavery

Eugene Genovese, fully cognizant of the non-capitalist character of slavery's labour-process, has attempted to explain this by reference to slavery's non-capitalist relations of production. While making many advances over those who consider plantation slavery a form of capitalism, Genovese's analysis remains theoretically unsatisfying. Genovese's characterization of Southern slavery as non-capitalist rests on a comparison of the 'rationality' of capitalism with the 'irrationality' of plantation slavery. Relying on Weber's discussion of slavery, Genovese sees four major irrational features of slavery: First, the master cannot adjust the size of his labor-force in accordance with business fluctuations . . . Second, the capital outlay is much greater and riskier for slave labor than for free. Third, the domination of society by a planter class increases the risk of political influence in the market. Fourth, the prices of cheap labor usually dry up rather quickly, and beyond a certain point costs become excessively burdensome'. 10 These irrational features of slavery, combined with the non-bourgeois and aristocratic ideology of the planters, and their propensity toward conspicuous consumption, led to continual investment in more land and more slaves, rather than new and more productive instruments and tools, with consequent technological stagnation and low labour productivity.11

Genovese's arguments remain theoretically problematic because of his failure to produce a concept of the necessary relations that constitute the slave form of production, thereby weakening his analysis at two major points. First, the 'irrational' features of slavery he borrows from Weber are based on a comparison of the observable features of slavery with those of capitalism; no necessary relationships are drawn between the 'irrationality' of slavery and the 'rationality' of capitalism, and their respective relations of production. In particular, the inability of masters to adjust the size of their labour-force remains undetermined by the structure of the master-slave relation. This lack of theoretical specification leaves Genovese's analysis of slavery's dynamics at the level of abstracted empirical generalization. Second, Genovese's failure to produce a concept of a slave form of production forces him to rely on notions of 'human motivation' in his discussion of the productivity of slave labour. Genovese relies heavily on the nineteenth-century English economist, I.E. Cairnes, for his discussion of the slave labour-process. According to Cairnes, the slave's unfree legal status deprives him of any interest in the

¹⁰ E. D. Genovese, The Political Economy of Shenery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Shape South, New York 1967, p. 16.

¹¹ Genovese's empirical findings of a complete technical stagnation have to be revised in the light of recent research that shows a highly episodic process of technical change in the plantation South See R. D. Garrett, 'Primitive Accumulation in the Antebellum Cotton South', Dissertation, New School for Social Research 1978, Chapter 4

production process, making him a reluctant worker whose labour can be utilized only under close supervision of highly repetitious tasks. By making 'human motivation' a determination of labour productivity, Genovese falls into a similar problematic as Fogel and Engerman. While Genovese's slaves are unmotivated labourers because of their lack of personal freedom; Fogel and Engerman's slaves are imbued with their masters' Protestant spirit which compels them to efficient labour and 'achievement under adversity'. By placing human motivation at the centre of their discussion of labour-productivity, Fogel, Engerman and Genovese ignore the structural determinations of labour-productivity given by the specific and antagonistic relations of production in different forms of production. ¹²

Neither the notion that slavery is a variant of capitalist production, nor Genovese's formulations on the non-capitalist character of slavery are satisfactory. Those who conceive of slavery as a form of capitalism ignore the specificity of the relations of surplus appropriation that define slavery and capitalism; while Genovese fails to present a rigorous concept of the necessary relations that constitute slavery as a form of production. The conceptual differentia specifica of slavery and capital as forms of social labour can be understood along the following lines: Under capitalist social relations of production, the direct producers are excluded from the effective possession of both the means of production and subsistence. The direct producer enters the capitalist production process as a variable element of production, capable of being fired or replaced by machinery. This relation gives capital the powers of real possession and the ability to introduce new techniques into the labour process, increasing the productivity of labour and the appropriation of relative surplus-labour. Under the relations of production that characterize slavery, the direct producers enter the plantation slavery production process as constant elements of production, entitling them to access to the means of subsistence in order to reproduce their value as means of production. The character of slaves as both direct producers and means of production, severely limits the ability of the masters to regulate the size of their labour force, burdening the non-producers with inflexible costs of reproducing their direct producers. These structural features of slavery's antagonistic relations of production, which shape the daily economic class struggle under plantation slavery, block the masters' ability to reorganize the labour-process through technical innovation. The masters are forced to organize the production process along the lines of closely supervised gang-labour, making the only possible methods of increasing labour productivity the intensification of labour and the migration of production to more fertile soils. These forms of absolute surplus-labour appropriation made geographic expansion (addition of more slaves and more land) the most 'rational' mode for increasing production under slavery—a tendency accentuated in the American South by soil exhaustion and changes in textile production to which slavery was subordinated. 13

¹² J E Cairnes, The Slave Power, New York 1862; Fogel and Engerman, pp 258-264, Genovese, pp 43-44.

¹³ For data on differential soil productivity in the antebellum South, see James D. Foust and Dale S. Swan, 'Productivity and Profitability of Antebellum Slave Labor: Λ Micro-Approach', Agricultural History 44, 1, pp. 44–45

The non-capitalist character of plantation slavery had important effects on the social division of labour and the development of industry in the antebellum South. The 'traditional' historical interpretation of plantation slavery's impact on Southern economic development emphasized the incompatibility of slavery with the development of industry. The advocates of this thesis pointed to several factors that posed obstacles to the industrial capitalist development of the antebellum South: the political hostility of the planters to the emergence of a wage-earning class, the small-scale of immigration to the South created by fears of slave competition on the labour market, and the shallow markets provided by the plantations for the products of industrial enterprises. Criticisms of 'traditionalism' have centred on the size of the market created by the plantations. Fogel and Engerman have challenged the notion that the plantations provided a small market for industrial goods. They claim that the 'traditionalists' estimates of per capita income in the South, including the incomes assigned to the slaves, are too low. Fogel and Engerman found that per capita income in the South was reasonably high compared with the antebellum North and was growing at a faster rate. On the basis of these calculations, Fogel and Engerman concluded that the plantations could have provided a large and growing market for industrially produced commodities.14

Plantations and Markets

There is a theoretical problem posed by the attempt to measure the size of the market provided by the plantations of the cotton South with per capita income statistics. Such an attempt obscures the fact that the size of the home market for commodities, the depth of the social division of labour, is determined by the extent to which the means of production and means of subsistence are reproduced through commodity circulation. In other words, the 'effective demand' generated is determined by the extent to which non-producers purchase objects and instruments of production, and direct producers purchase their means of consumption. As we have seen, slave relations of production block the process of technical innovation, thus limiting the demand generated by the cotton plantation for objects and instruments of production. This places definite limits to the development of industries producing means of production. In addition, slaves have direct access to means of subsistence provided by their masters. No matter how large the amount of use-values the slaves consume (the basis of the various estimates of slaves' 'per capita income'), the amount they purchase is negligible. This feature of slavery's relations of exploitation block the emergence and expansion of industries producing means of consumption. 15

In the antebellum South, the structural isolation of the slave plantation from commodity circulation was accentuated by the planters' attempts to make the plantations 'self-sufficient' in food, clothing and tools. The

¹⁴ For the 'traditional' historical approach see W N Parker, 'Slavery and Southern Economic Development' Agricultural History 44, 1, pp. 115-126; also, Fogel and Engerman, pp. 247-57.

¹⁵ This discussion of the determination of the depth of the social division of labour by the specificity of different relations of production is drawn from V. I. Lenin, *The Development of Capitahum in Russia*, Moscow 1974, pp. 37–43, 68–70, 184–88.

slaves produced both cotton as a commodity, and corn, livestock and certain tools and implements as use-values. 16 This 'self-sufficiency' not only sheltered the cotton plantation from the fluctuations of the world cotton market, but, by removing the reproduction of the plantation production unit from the sphere of commodity circulation, severely limited the development of the social division of labour in the South. The limitations of the development of the home market posed by slavery's relations of production and the 'self-sufficiency' of the plantations had important implications for the development of non-slave agriculture and industry in the South. The 'self-sufficiency' of the plantations in foodstuffs meant that free farmers seeking to increase their production of commodities found a negligible market on the cotton plantations. This reinforced the tendency for non-cotton, non-slaveowning agricultural producers in the South to remain outside of the sphere of commodity production and circulation. 17

The shallow social division of labour in the Southern countryside, created by the reproduction of both free farms and slave plantations outside of the sphere of commodity relations, severely limited the development and diversification of industry. While industrial production did develop on the basis of both free wage-labour and slave-rentals, the general diversification of industrial production was blocked by the shallow home market created by plantation slavery. As William Parker points out, the South lagged behind the North in all categories of industry, particularly the medium and large-scale production of iron, textile machinery and agricultural implements. Industry and manufacture in the South was limited to resource extraction (lumber, mining), plantation-auxiliary production (rope, ginning, sugar refining), and the production of low quality textiles and iron for the plantations' limited needs. In sum, the shallow home market dictated by plantation slavery left the South the least industrialized area in the antebellum US. 18

The 'self-sufficiency' of the plantations helps to answer questions concerning the role of the expansion of cotton production in the expansion of commodity production and circulation in the trans-Allegheny West. Douglas North, following upon the work of Louis Schmidt, claimed that in the antebellum period the Southern plantations constituted a major market for Western foodstuffs. 19 Basing this assertion on the gross receipts of Western grain and flour at the port of New Orleans, North maintained that the expansion of Southern plantation production was a spur to the expansion of commodity production and circulation nationally. The first criticism of the North thesis came with Albert Fishlow's 'Antebellum Interregional Trade Reconsidered'. 20 Fishlow

Agricultural Hittery, 44, 1, January 1970, pp. 2-24; G. Wright, pp. 55-74.

17 G. Wright, 'Economic Democracy' and the Concentration of Agricultural Wealth in the Cotton South, 1850-1860', Agricultural History, 44, 1

18 Parker, 'Southern Economic Development', pp. 121-3. On the use of slaves in industrial production see R. Stanobin, Industrial Slavery in the Old South, New York 1970.

19 The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860, New York 1966, see also Louis B.

1965.

¹⁶ Robert E. Gallman, 'Self-sufficiency in the Cotton Economy of the Antebellum South',

Schmidt, 'Internal Commerce and the Development of a National Economy Before 1860', Journal of Polistical Economy 47 (December 1939).

20 In R. Andreano (ed.), New Views on American Economic Development, Cambridge (Mass.)

began his challenge to North's thesis with a re-examination of the receipts for foodstuffs in the port of New Orleans. In disaggregating this data, Fishlow made two interesting discoveries. First, New Orleans was a major trans-shipping centre for Western foodstuffs from at least the 1830s through 1860. Approximately one-half of the Western commodities shipped to New Orleans were re-shipped to the Northeast. Second, by comparing the proportion of Western goods consumed in the South with the proportion of Western commodities shipped via New Orleans, Fishlow discovered that the South consumed no more than 20% to 25% of Western commodities. On the basis of these findings, Fishlow claimed that the plantation South was not a major market for Western agricultural commodities, and that the major pattern of internal commodity circulation prior to the Civil War was between the West and Northeast. Thus, the expansion of plantation slavery, at least in terms of its direct effects on the development of agrarian petty-commodity production, cannot be seen as a spur to the process of capitalist development in antebellum America.

What can we conclude from our discussion of plantation slavery, concerning the place of this form of social labour in the process by which capitalist production's conditions of existence and dominance were realized? The expansion of cotton commodity production on the basis of plantation slavery was a spur, that was transformed into an obstacle, to the development of capitalism in the antebellum American social formation. Moreover the transition of commercial plantation slavery from a spur to an obstacle was determined by the process by which merchant capital created the conditions for its subordination to industrial capital. Northeastern merchants, who facilitated the trade of cotton with the capitalist world market, accumulated mercantile wealth from the circulation of cotton. Cotton, as the major export of the antebellum us. also created a favourable balance of trade and sound international credit for American merchants and bankers. The expansion of commercial slavery provided the basis for both the geographic expansion of merchant capitalist operations (land speculation) and the importation of moneycapital from Europe for merchant-sponsored transportation projects in the 1830s. As we shall see, the increase of commodity production and circulation engendered through the agencies of merchant capital brought agrarian petty-production under the dominance of the law of value. This deepening of the social division of labour in the North transformed the agraman West into the home market for industrial capital, creating the conditions for the subordination of merchants to industrial capital in the 1840s and 1850s.

The emergence and rise to dominance of specifically capitalist production, on the basis of the expansion of agrarian petty-commodity production, transformed the geographic expansion of slavery into an obstacle to the development of capitalism. The expansion of plantation slavery into the territories conquered from Mexico in 1845 would have posed economic and political obstacles to the dominance of industrial capital. Economically, the expansion of slavery would have stifled the development of agrarian petty-commodity production and the social division of labour, strangling the home market for industrial capital. Politically, the expansion of slavery would have increased planter

representation in the federal government, which would have blocked the implementation of such pro-industrial capitalist state policies as the Homestead Act and the protective tariff. In sum, the commodity producing character of plantation slavery was a catalyst to capitalist development as long as merchant capital was the major agency for the expansion of commodity production and the deepening of the social division of labor. As merchant capital created the conditions for its subordination to industrial capital, by generalizing commodity relations in the Northern us, slavery's non-capitalist relations of production became an obstacle to the dominance and expanded reproduction of capitalist production in the us social formation.

II. Agrarian Petty-Commodity Production

In contrast with the debates about plantation slavery, where the crucial theoretical and conceptual issues remain embedded within historiographic controversy, analyses of agrarian petty-commodity production have found a much firmer conceptual basis. In particular, the exchange between James O'Connor and Robert Sherry, 21 though plagued by certain conceptual ambiguities, has posed the central questions concerning the concrete dynamics of family farming in the antebellum North and the place of this form of production in the process of primitive accumulation in the Us. O'Connor's discussion of family farming is introduced in the course of his critical review of Douglas Dowd's The Twisted Dream. Pointing to the deleterious theoretical effects of Dowd's reliance on Veblen's notions of 'business' and 'industry', O'Connor accuses Dowd of failing to recognize, 'the theoretical distinction between capitalism and independent commodity production as modes of production'.22 This conceptual failing leads Dowd to obscure what O'Connor sees as the obstacles posed by the 'independent mode' to the development of capitalism. According to O'Connor, independent commodity production posed an obstacle to capitalist production in the antebellum era because of its ability to provide the conditions of reproduction to the direct producers outside of the capitalist labour market. In other words, independent commodity production blocked the formation of a class of propertyless wage-earners forced to sell their labour-power to capital in order to obtain means of consumption.

This analysis of the place of Northern agriculture in the process of capitalist development prior to the Civil War is based on O'Connor's analysis of the laws of motion of the 'independent mode of production'. According to O'Connor, the family farms of the antebellum Northeast and Middle West were 'subsistence' units of production. Marketing only their surplus product, the family farms were not dependent on commodity circulation for the reproduction of their means of production and subsistence. This autonomy of the 'independent mode' from the

²¹ James O'Connor, "The Twisted Dream', Monthly Revew 26, 10 (March 1975), Robert Sherry, 'Comments on O'Connor's Review of The Twisted Dream: Independent Commodity Production versus Petty-Bourgeous Production', Monthly Revew 28, 1 (May 1976); James O'Connor, 'A Note on Independent Commodity Production and Petty Capitalism', Monthly Revew 28, 1 (May 1976).

¹² O'Connor, 'Twisted Dream', p. 46.

²³ O'Connor, 'Note', pp. 61-62.

market in its economic reproduction had two consequences for this mode's relation to the development of capitalism. On the one hand, the isolation of the antebellum farm from commodity exchange meant that 'market forces' alone were incapable of dislodging the direct producers from the effective ownership of the objects and instruments of production. This implies that the family farm was a real historical alternative to wage-labour before the Civil War. On the other hand, the family farm's logic of subsistence (which can be expressed in terms of the circuit, commodity-money-commodity; C-M-C), led to a stagnation of the productive forces. This implies that the 'independent mode's' dominance was an obstacle to the deepening of the social division of labour, the home market for industrial capital.²⁴

O'Connor concludes his discussion of the 'independent mode' with an historical description of the relation of this form of social labour to capitalist production. ²⁵ According to O'Connor, the logic of subsistence governed the agricultural production of the Northern states before the Civil War, retarding the development of capitalism by robbing industrial capital of its needed supply of wage-labour. Politically the emergent industrialists needed the support of the Western subsistence farmers in their struggle against the planters. With the end of the war and the defeat of the planters, the industrialists 'betrayed' their farmer allies and began to implement a series of state policies designed to smash the 'independent mode of production'. Through railroad and mining land grants, massive immigration and other state policies, the industrial bourgeoisie destroyed the 'independent mode', opening the possibility of large-scale capitalist production in the late-nineteenth century.

Sherry's criticisms of O'Connor focus on the dynamics governing Northern agricultural production, the conceptual status of the notion of an 'independent mode of production', and the place of this form of production in the process of primitive accumulation. Sherry begins by making a basic reassessment of the concrete dynamics governing the family farm of the antebellum North. For Sherry, the free farmers of the West and Northeast marketed not merely their surplus product, but nearly their entire product. As a result, the free farmers of the antebellum North were dependent on commodity production and exchange for their economic reproduction, and were not governed by the circuit of subsistence (C-M-C), but by the circuit of competition and accumulation. (M-C-M'). The competitive and accumulationist dynamic forced the family farmers to undertake the continual technical reorganization of their labour processes in order to survive. This process of competition, innovation and accumulation led to a process of concentration and centralization of objects and instruments of production (tools, imple-

²⁴ This is a consequence that O'Connor fails to recognize when he claims that the family fairns did provide a mass market for industrial capital. (See "Twisted Dream", p. 48)
²⁵ Ibid, pp. 47–52. O'Connor's analysis of pre-Civil War Northern agriculture and its transformation only after the war is shared by a number of authors: Kevin D. Kelly, "The Independent Mode of Production," Resear of Radical Political Economics 11, 1 (Spring 1979), Mischael Menill, 'Cash is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency in the Rural Economy of the United States', Radical History Resears 3, 4 (September 1976); Rosa Luxemburg, The Accumulation of Capital, New York 1968, esp. pp. 396–411.

ments and land); a process of social differentiation into an agrarian petty-bourgeoisie on the one hand, and a growing mass of propertyless wage-labourers on the other. These laws of motion, the product of the subordination of this productive form to the simplest form of the law of value, 26 lead Sherry to challenge O'Connor's notion that self-organized commodity production constitutes a 'mode of production'. For Sherry, 'It does seem that for a social form to be elevated to the position of a mode of production, rather than being seen as an aspect of some other more encompassing mode of production, the form being considered must have an existence and a dynamic that can be isolated from those of all other social forms one considers to be modes of production.'27 Since self-organized commodity production shares a dynamic of accumulation with the capitalist mode of production, Sherry rejects giving it the conceptual status of a 'mode of production'. Instead, Sherry conceives of self-organized commodity production as a form of capitalist production, the 'petty-bourgeois form of capital'.

By recasting the laws of motion governing Northern agriculture prior to the Civil War, Sherry is able completely to alter O'Connor's interpretation of the place of this form of production in capitalist development. 28 Rather than an obstacle to capitalist development, free farming in the North becomes a central mechanism in the emergence of manufacture and industry in the nineteenth century. The dependence of the family farms on commodity circulation for economic reproduction, and their continual improvement of their objects and instruments of production, made Northern agriculture into a massive home market for capitalist produced means of production and consumption. The expansion of agricultural commodity production stimulated the emergence of capitalist processing of agricultural produce. Nor did the Western frontier constitute an escape from wage-labour. As concentration and centralization of farming raised the costs of establishing a viable farm, increasing numbers of ex-farmers and their children were forced into wage-labour. This interpretation transforms the petty-bourgeois farmers from a passive and foolish group, manipulated by the industrialists, into a class struggling to advance its position, by promoting the development of commodity production and circulation.

Although Sherry's analysis marks a theoretical advance over O'Connor's notion of an 'independent mode of production', his concepts remain ambiguous in two areas: his analysis of Northern free farming as a form of capital, and his notion that the subordination of self-organized commodity production to the dictates of the law of value is a 'natural' consequence of commodity circulation. Sherry's analysis of Northern agricultural production as a form of capital rests on the fact that both

²⁶ On the operation of the law of value in petry-commodity production, see Engels, 'Law of Value and Rate of Profit' in *Capital*, Volume 3, New York 1967, pp 891–907, Ernest Mandel, *Marxust Economic Theory*, New York 1968, pp. 65–71, and Maurice Dobb in Rodney Hilton (ed.), *The Transition fram Foundation to Capitalism*, London *NLB* 1976, pp 60–65, 167 While Dobb and Engels differ from Sherry on the question of whether petry-commodity production constitutes a 'mode of production', they share the view that this form of production is governed by a competitive and technically innovative dynamic.

²⁷ Sherry, 'Comments', p. 55.

²⁸ Ibid, pp 57-60

forms of production are governed by the logic of self-expanding value, м-с-м', which Marx called the 'general formula for capital.'29 It is only in this most general sense that self-organized commodity production governed by the law of value can be conceived as a form of capital. The conception of capital solely as self-expanding value, shared by both O'Connor and Sherry, tends to obscure the fact that capital is a specific relation. The relation that characterizes capital defines two antagonistic social classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which engage in a specific form of class struggle. Self-organized commodity production subordinated to the law of value defines only one class, the petty-bourgeoisie. By conceiving of Northern farmers as 'capitalist' producers, Sherry runs the risk of conflating the class location and appropriate forms of class struggle of two distinct social classes, the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie. Such a conflation of these two classes could lead to ignoring the possible and specific antagonisms between the petty-bourgeoisie and industrial capital. In the case of the political struggles in the antebellum us, this conflation could lead to obscuring the changing class alliances that produced the political crisis that led to the Civil War. 30 In order to maintain a clear understanding of the specific determinations of the class location of the petty-bourgeoisie and industrial bourgeoisie in their respective social relations of production, we will conceive of self-organized commodity production governed by the law of value as petty-commodity production—2 form of production, distinct from, but transitional to, the capitalist mode of production.

The second problem involved in Sherry's analysis of the dynamics of petty-commodity production is his assertion that the dependence of petty-producers on commodity production for their economic reproduction is a natural result of the logic of commodity production and circulation. However, as Robert Brenner³¹ has pointed out, it is possible to conceive of situations where direct producers are not compelled to specialize and market increasingly large portions of their production. In such situations, the direct producers maintain non-market access to their means of production and consumption. These producers are relatively impervious to the 'dictates of the market', and are under no competitive compulsion either to accumulate and innovate or to lose possession of their means of economic reproduction. Sherry's conception poses a dual problem. On the one hand, the possible existence of forms of commodity production governed by a logic of subsistence is denied, making all historical forms of self-organized commodity production merely 'moments' in the inevitable and teleological emergence of capitalist production. On the other hand Sherry's conception can lead to ignoring the specific historical mechanisms by which self-organized commodity production is subordinated to the law of value in the process of primitive accumulation.

²⁹ Capital, Volume 1, Harmondsworth NLB/Preguest 1976, ppt. 247-57.

pp. 191-336.

Nobert Brenner, The Origins of Capitalist Development Λ Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism', NLR 104 (July-August 1977), pp. 51-55, 73-75

³⁰ For the most rigorous discussion to date of the petry-bourgeoisis and its specific forms of class struggle, see Nicos Poulantins, *Classis in Contemporary Capitalium*, London *NLB* 1975, pp. 101–116.

Demythologizing the Family Farm

We can conceive of the possible existence of two forms of self-organized commodity production. One form is governed by a logic of subsistence, the result of the independence from commodity production. This form is a variant of what Lenin and Luxemburg described as 'patriarchal peasant' or 'natural economy', ³² which poses obstacles to the development of capitalist production along the path suggested by O'Connor. The other form is governed by the law of value, the result of its production units' dependence on commodity production for their economic reproduction. Petty-commodity production does not pose any obstacle to capitalist development and can in fact be a spur to it along the lines discussed by Sherry. The question of which of these two forms of self-organized commodity production characterized free farming in the antebellum North can only be answered by reference to the historiographic material.

As Sherry points out, O'Connor's historical analysis of the dynamics of free farming and its place in the process of primitive accumulation in antebellum America is based on a 'very common and ancient populist interpretation of American farmers.'33 The major representatives of this populist historiography are Mary and Charles Beard and Fredrick Jackson Turner. 34 The research of Turner and his students found the antebellum Northwest to be occupied by sturdy independent farmers, who, through selling a portion of their produce, were self-sufficient in foodstuffs and either made their own farm implements or bought them from a village blacksmith. Technological innovation in the agrarian labour-process was slow and competition among farmers was limited. Little concentration of land holdings took place, and with a vast area open to settlement, the West was a 'safety-valve' for impoverished farmers and urban workers seeking to escape permanent wage-labour. While Turner's schema did allow for the eventual subordination of independent farmers to the pressures of the market, the ever-expanding frontier allowed for subsistence production to be continually renewed both before and after the Civil War. If Turner and the Beards' historical description of antebellum Northern agriculture was accurate, then O'Connor analysis of antebellum history would be substantially correct. Northern free farming would be governed by a dynamic of subsistence which would produce technical stagnation of the labour process, the limitation of the development of the social division of labour, and would provide an escape for a large portion of the population from wage-labour. Through these processes the development of capitalist production prior to the Civil War would be retarded, and Northern agriculture, a form of 'natural economy', would stand in an antagonistic relationship with capitalism.

Unfortunately for O'Connor, research on antebellum agriculture in the North and West since the 1930s has progressively challenged the

³² Luxemburg, Chapters 27 and 29; Lenin, pp. 42-43, 68, 175-90.

³³ Sherry, p. 58

³⁴ Charles A. and Mary B. Beard, A Basic History of the United States, Garden City 1944), pp. 24–36, 128–193, 246–86; Fredrick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History', in S. Salisbury (ed.), Essays on the History of the American West, Hinsdale, Ill. 1975

description of the Beards and Turner. The general trend of historical research has produced a description of antebellum agriculture more in line with Sherry's analysis: the development of Northern agriculture was governed by the dynamics of petty-commodity production, not those of 'natural economy'. By the 1840s and 1850s, at the latest, agrarian self-organized commodity production in the Northeast and West was governed by the law of value. Merchant capital, through the mechanisms of land law, land speculation and the promotion of internal improvements, was responsible for the enforced dependence of free farmers on commodity production for their economic reproduction. In particular, federal land policy promoted the transformation of land into a commodity through the public auction of the public domain. This policy encouraged the speculative purchasing of large blocks of land, which forced actual settlers to purchase land from large land companies at prices well above the minimal prices charged by the federal government. The cost of land purchases and the burden of mortgages to the land company forced the farmers to specialize their crops and increase their production of commodities, thus becoming dependent on the sphere of commodity circulation for their economic reproduction.³⁵ The merchants also promoted internal improvements projects, such as canals and railways in the 1820s and 1830s, which lowered the costs of commodity circulation, further promoting commodity production.

The subordination of free farming to the law of value unleashed a process of increasing labour-productivity, technical innovation and social differentiation in the 1840s and 1850s. This period saw a sharp rise in the productivity of the farms of the old Northwest and the eastern Great Plains. This increase in the productivity of labour was accomplished through the introduction of labour saving farm implements, such as the mechanical reaper, new seed drills and new ploughs.³⁶ This technical innovation aided in sharpening social differentiation in the West by raising the costs of 'farm-building', the costs of establishing a commercially viable farm. This process of social differentiation not only led to the dispossession of many petty-producers, but effectively eliminated any opportunity for urban workers to 'escape' wage-labour by settling in the West. For, as the critics of Turner have demonstrated, the cost of establishing a commercially viable farm in the late antebellum West was beyond the means of even the most well-paid and thrifty skilled worker.37

The development and expansion of Northern agriculture was shaped by the dynamics of petty-commodity production, not those of 'natural economy'. The subordination of self-organized commodity production to the dictates of the law of value, through the activities of merchant capital and merchant-sponsored state policies, had been completed by the late 1830s. From the early 1840s until the end of the nineteenth century, the expansion of petty-commodity production was the main motor for the expansion of industrial capital. The expansion of petty-commodity

³⁵ Paul W Gates, "The Role of the Land Speculator in Western Development', in Nash. ³⁶ W. N. Parker and J. L. Klein, Productivity Growth in Grain Production in the United States, 1840–1860 and 1900–1910', in Peter Temin (ed.), The Naw Economic Hutery, Harmondsworth 1973

³⁷ C. H. Danhof, 'Farm-Making Costs and the "Safety-Valve": 1850-1860', Journal of Political Economy 49 (June 1941).

production deepened the social division of labour, the home market for capitalist production of means of production and consumption. As we shall see, agrarian petty-commodity production in the antebellum period laid the basis for the development of an 'agro-industrial complex', a series of capitalist industries producing farm implements and supplies and processing farm produce. ³⁸ This process of capitalist expansion, based on the subordination of petty-commodity production to the capitalist mode of production, faced only one obstacle prior to 1860: the expansion of the slave form of production, which would strangle industrial capital's home market and block its political policies at the level of the state.

III. Capitalist Manufacture and Industry

Our discussion of capitalist manufacture and industry will revolve around three central problems: the process by which an industrial working class was formed; the origins of the industrial bourgeoisie; and the nature of the 'vanguard' branches of production in the capitalist industrialization of the us. The first two problems, the formation of an industrial bourgeoisie and proletariat, directly confront the question of the process by which the basic elements of capitalist production come into existence. The third problem, the identification of the 'vanguard' branches of industrial production, will allow us to determine precisely how non-capitalist forms of production, such as slavery and petty-commodity production, were either obstacles or motors of capitalist development in the antebellum us.

There is a general historiographic consensus on the formation of the antebellum American proletariat. 39 Prior to the 1840s, the differentiation of artisan producers and the progressive impoverishment of New England farm families produced an industrial and manufacturing labour force. However the restricted size of the available labour force posed problems for industrial capital, especially in cotton textile production. Various methods of securing an adequate labour-supply were introduced in cotton and other industries; the 'Waltham' system of employing single young women and housing them in company dormitories, and the 'Rhode Island' system of employing entire families who were paid in script redeemable at company-owned stores and housing offices. Both systems aimed to secure an adequate supply of labour-power for industrial capital, and to muffle the class struggle between labour and capital by creating 'paternalistic' cultural-ideological bonds between the two antagonistic classes. In both respects, these systems of labour-power procurement met with only limited success. Labour-power remained scarce and costly; and trade-union organizations, albeit unstable, emerged in the cotton industry and other branches of production in the 1820s and 1830s.

In the 1840s and 1850s, the obstacle to the development of capitalism posed by the shortage of labour-power was overcome by massive immigration from Europe. While immigration had taken place in the

39 Herbert Gutman, Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America, 1815–1919',

American Historical Review 78 (June 1973)

³⁸ Michel Aglietta, 'Phases of US Capitalist Expansion', NLR 110 (July-August 1978), pp 19-21; Mike Davis, "Fordism" in Crisis A Review of Michel Aglietta's Regulation at Crisis, Review (Binghamton) 2, 2 (Fall 1978), pp. 218-19.

1820s and 1830s, its volume was so small as to have little impact on the supply of labour-power to capital. In the 1840s the volume of immigration tripled, and doubled again in the 1850s. The commercial crisis of the mid-1840s, the potato famine in Ireland, and the active recruitment of immigrant workers by industrial capital produced this increase in the numbers of immigrants to the us in the twenty years prior to the Civil War. This massive inflow of workers, which could be conceived as capital's response to native labour's economic militancy, made the 'Waltham' and 'Rhode Island' systems redundant by creating the first permanent reserve army of labour in the us. Until the early twentieth century, European and Asian immigration would continually re-shape and supplement the American working class, giving this proletariat certain of its specific political and ideological characteristics.

In contrast to the historiographic consensus on the process by which the industrial working class was constituted, there is considerable disagreement on the origins of the industrial bourgeoisie in the us. At the centre of the debate is the question of what was the major source of industrial capital prior to the Civil War: the savings of artisan petty-producers or the wealth of merchants in the Northeastern commercial centres. While this debate has not, for the most part, been conducted within a Marxist framework, it does address certain questions raised by Marx's discussion of the 'two roads' to capitalist production in the third volume of Capital. According to Marx, the transition to capitalist production can proceed along two paths: 'The producer becomes merchant and capitalist, in contrast to the natural agrarian economy and guild-bound handicrafts of the medieval urban industries. This is the really revolutionary path. Or else the merchant establishes sway over production. However much this is a stepping-stone . . . it cannot by itself contribute to the overthrow of the old mode of production, but rather tends to preserve and retain it as its precondition. 40

The first and 'really revolutionary path' to capitalist industry is clear: the artisan becomes petty-commodity producer, competes and accumulates. The competition among petty-producers leads to a process of social differentiation, where the more productive direct producers become capitalists and purchase the labour-power of their less productive neighbours who have lost the effective possession of their means of production. The second path is more problematic, for it is not a path to capitalist production proper. Historically, the second path referred to the out-work, or surlag, system organized by merchant monopolists, which increased the volume of commodity production, but preserved the relations of production and the labour process of artisanal production. In attempting to resolve the problems presented by the 'second path', Marx offers us another variant of this path, in which, 'the merchant becomes directly an industrial capitalist'. 41 In other words, the second path can be conceived as the process by which merchant capital withdraws from the sphere of commodity circulation, purchases means of production and hires wage-labourers, becoming industrial capital proper.

The historiographic discussion of the origins of the industrial bourgeoi-

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 335.

⁴⁰ Capital, Volume 3, p 334

sie in the us can be seen as revolving around Marx's typology of the paths to capitalist production: the 'artisan' road or the 'merchant' road. The supporters of the hypothesis that merchants were the prime movers of capitalist industry in the antebellum period, such as Lance Davis, have based their arguments on the financing of the New England textile industry. 42 Although small firms established by skilled artisans did dominate cotton textile production prior to 1815, they were rapidly displaced by the development of large-scale industrial production in the late 1810s and 1820s. The cotton factories established after the War of 1812 were financed by large merchants who sought alternative investments after the decline of the American carrying trade. As Davis has shown, merchants in cotton and other commodities were both the main purchasers of the stock of cotton textile firms, and the major source of both long and short term industrial credit. On the basis of the fact that cotton textiles were the first fully 'mechanized' and capitalist industry in the US. Davis and Ware concluded that the dominant path to capitalist production was the direct transformation of merchants into industrial capitalists.

In contrast, other historians have argued that the main path to industrial capitalist production was through the differentiation of artisanal producers. Supporters of this position (Louis Hacker and Herbert Gutman) have based their arguments on the study of industries other than cotton textiles: 170n, farm implements, railroad supplies and machine-making. 43 Beginning with the observation that the shift from commerce to industry was unique to a small group of New England merchants, proponents of this hypothesis have sought the origins of the industrial bourgeoisie in the self-exploitation and accumulation of skulled artisans. Some of these skilled artisans, particularly in locomotive and machine production, began as skilled workers in the textile machine shops that were part of most textile mills prior to the 1830s. Other artisans, particularly in farm implements and iron production, began as blacksmiths and small-scale refiners of iron. Through self-exploitation and partnerships with well-off petty-bourgeois farmers and shopkeepers, these skilled artisans and workers were able to acquire additional objects and instruments of production, hire wage-labourers, and transform themselves into industrial capitalists. For these historians, the role of merchant capital was marginal to the development of an industrial bourgeoisie, limited to making occasional loans and marketing commodities produced by the artisan cum capitalist.

The Really Revolutionary' Path

Neither of these historiographic theses, either of the transformation of merchants into industrialists or the autonomous emergence of industrial capitalists from the ranks of the artisanal petty-bourgeoisie, is historically complete. Those who see a variant of Marx's 'second path' as dominant,

⁴² L. Davis, "The New England Textile Mills and the Capital Markets: A Study in Industrial Borrowing", in A. W. Coates and R. M. Robertson (eds.), Ettays in American Economic History, New York 1970.

⁴³ Hacker, pp 257-66; Herbert Gutman, "The Reality of the Rags to Riches "Myth". The Case of Patterson, New Jersey Locomotive, Iron and Machinery Manufacturers, 1830-90', in Work, Culture and Security New York 1976.

base their assertions on very shaky empirical evidence. Not only was cotton textile production unique in the transformation of merchants into industrialists, but, as we shall see, the centrality given to cotton textiles in the industrial revolution in the USA by most economic historians is misplaced. However, those historians who see the origins of the American industrial bourgeoisie solely in the self-exploitation and differentiation of artisanal petty-producers tend to obscure the complex historical relationship between merchant and industrial capital in the antebellum period.

While 'men of small means', skilled workers and artisans, were the major agents of the organization of capitalist production in the antebellum era, they were very dependent upon merchant capital for both long and short term credit.44 While merchants rarely took up the powers of industrial capital to allocate productive resources or reorganize the labour process, their control of money-capital ensured their dominance over industrial capital before the Civil War. In the 1840s and 1850s, however, some manufacturers, especially those producing means of production, began to dispense with the services of merchants, as their markets became centralized with the concentration of various industries. But it was only during the Civil War that the majority of industrial capitalists were able to break from financial dependence upon merchants, and subordinate merchant capital to the logic of industrial capital. In sum, the origins of the American industrial bourgeoisse are found in the social differentiation and transformation of artisanal petty producers, not in the direct transformation of merchants into industrial capitalists. However, the transformation of the artisanal petty-bourgeoisie into an industrial bourgeoisie did not take place simply through the self-exploitation of the petty-producers. Merchant capital, as the source of money-capital in the form of credit, was able to maintain its dominance over industry until the Civil War.

In the light of the historical experience of the Us, we can begin to refine Marx's cursory discussion of the first, 'really revolutionary' path to capitalist production. The path by which the direct producer becomes her/his own merchant, and is transformed into a capitalist, must not be conceived in a highly abstract manner. The emergence of an industrial bourgeoisie through the autonomous self-exploitation of artisans and skilled workers has occurred very rarely, it at all. Instead, merchant capital intervenes in the process of the social differentiation of petty-producers as the primary source of money-capital to continue and expand production. The 'revolutionary' path must be conceived in terms of the process by which the artisanal petty-commodity producers come to exercise the characteristic powers of industrial capital, those of economic ownership and real possession. This road to capitalist production implies a two-fold struggle on the part of the artisanal petty-bourgeoisie cum industrial capital; to secure an adequate supply of labour-power, and to gain independence from, and subordinate to its own logic, merchant capital.

Our discussion of the origins of industrial capital in the United States has already touched upon the question of the 'vanguard' or leading branches

⁴⁴ H. C. Livesay and G. Porter, Merchants and Manufacturers, Baltimore 1971.

of capitalist production in the antebellum period. While certain business historians, such as Alfred Chandler, ⁴⁵ define leading branches of industry solely in terms of innovations in the internal organization of the firm, a more comprehensive definition is needed. Leading or vanguard branches of capitalist industry are characterized by both innovative labour processes and by their revolutionizing effects on the social division of labour. In other words, a central characteristic of a leading complex of branches of production is its ability to call forth new developments in the labour-process and create new branches of production in Department I (the department of social production producing objects and instruments of production).

The majority of the historians of antebellum American industrialization have drawn their explanatory model from the English industrial revolution.46 Both Marxist and bourgeois historians of American industrial capital have given the 'vanguard' role to the textile, shoe/boot, and railroad industries in the American industrial revolution. According to this model, the development of textile and shoe/boot production were characterized by the first development of specifically capitalist labour processes, and these industries, along with the railroads, called into existence new machine-making industries and innovations in the production of 1ron.⁴⁷ Such a conception has led Allen Dawley, in his study of the class struggle in the Massachusetts shoe industry to claim that the shoe industry constituted a 'microcosm of the industrial revolution' in the USA. 48 According to the traditional historiography of American capitalist industrialization,' the USA parallels Great Britain in terms of its leading branches of production and their effects on the social division of labour. However, this traditional historiographic model is both conceptually and historically flawed. Conceptually, the adaptation of a model of capitalist development based on empirical generalizations from the British example obfuscates the concrete historical specificity of different social formations' processes of capitalist development. Historically, the 'textiles' model fails to account for the much more central role played by the 'agro-industrial complex' in the development of capitalist industry in the us both before and after the Civil War.

The complex of industries producing farm-machinery, tools and supplies, and processing agricultural raw materials (meat-packing, leather tanning, flour milling and baking), were at the centre of the American industrial revolution. These branches of production were characterized by both technical innovation in their labour-process and either constituted or stimulated transformations in key branches of Department I. Farm implement and machine production alone made up 19.4% of all machine production by 1860, rising to 25.5% by 1870.⁴⁹ While statistical data on

48 Ibid, pp. 1-6

Alfred D Chandler, The Rathroads: The Nation's First Big Bunness, New York 1965
 For a thorough discussion of the specificity of the English Industrial Revolution, see Eric Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire, Harmondsworth 1969

⁴⁷ Alan Dawley, Class and Community, Cambridge (Mass.) 1976

⁴⁹ Computed from Manufactures of the Unsted States in 1960 Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Centus, Washington D.C. 1865, pp. clxxvii-ccxvi, Ninth Centus, 1870 Volume III.

The Statistics of Wealth and Industry in the United States, Washington, D.C., 1872, pp. 188–89, 614–5

the consumption of iron by different industries is not available for the antebellum period, the transformation of Northern agriculture and the formation of the agro-industrial complex was a major determinant of the technical development of the American iron industry. Louis Hunter has argued that the centralization of and technical innovations in the processes that constituted iron production in the 1840s and 1850s were determined by changes in the character or the market for iron goods. 50 The replacement of rural blacksmiths and farmers, who required high quality and versatile bar iron to produce a wide variety of products, by specialized industrial producers, who required lower quality and less versatile iron for a smaller number of commodities, was the main impetus for technical change in the late-antebellum from industry. This advance in the social division of labour, the transition from rural to specialized industrial producers, was the product of the subordination of agrarian production to the law of value. Commodities that farmers had purchased from local blacksmith or had made themselves were now produced by capitalist industries who purchased their raw materials from a technically transformed iron industry.

Thus in the late antebellum period (1840–60) the basis for the later acceleration of us industrial capitalism in the 'Gilded Age' was laid with the development of agrarian petty-commodity production and the agro-industrial complex. Only one obstacle stood in the way of this 'frontier regime of accumulation': the geographic expansion of plantation slavery. It was this economic contradiction between the necessary conditions for the expansion of slavery and capitalism in the 1840s and 1850s that determined, in the last instance, the political class struggles that culminated in the Civil War of 1861–1865.

IV. Conclusion: The Civil War

It remains to briefly consider the impact of the Civil War on the American social formation. ⁵¹ Prior to the 1960s, Civil War histomography was dominated by the belief that the war dramatically spurred the growth of industrialism. As expoused by its main representatives, the Beards and Hacker, ⁵² this tradition argued that the war galvanized industrial capitalism both economically and politically. On the one hand, the war economy with its inflation, lucrative government contracts and contract immigration stimulated the reorganization of industrial labour processes and vastly increased the volume of production. On the other hand, the war allowed the political representatives of the rising industrial bourgeoisie to secure hegemony within the federal state apparatus and to pass a series of policies—tariff and monetary reform, unrestricted immigration, the Homestead Act, and so on—which secured the conditions for untrammelled industrial expansion.

The Beards-Hacker view of the Civil War was unchallenged historical

⁵⁰ L. C. Hunter, "The Influence of the Market Upon Technique in the Iron Industry in Western Pennsylvania up to 1860', in Coats and Robertson, Esseys in Assertion Economic History.

³¹ A discussion of these problems is contained in my forthcoming doctoral dissertation. Primitive Accumulation, Class Struggle and the Capitalist State: Political Crisis and the Origins of US Capitalism', SUNY Binghamton.

orthodoxy until the publication of Thomas C. Cochran's Did the Civil War Retard Industrialization? in 1961, ⁵³ which attempted to statistically demolish their interpretation. Utilizing new statistical series produced by the economist Robert Gallman, Cochran examined the differential performance of the American industrial economy before, during and after the war. His calculations showed that American industry as a whole, measured in terms of value added by manufacture, grew at a slower rate in the 1860s than during the 1850s. Pig iron, textile and railroad production all displayed sharp declines in their growth rates during the war years compared to the five-year periods immediately preceding and following 1861–65. Coal output remained more or less constant. Cochran therefore concluded that the Civil War, far from catalyzing industrialization, actually retarded its 'normal' expansion.

The historiographic debate sparked by Cochran's revisionist essay is only today coming to a close. In a recent article summarizing the voluminous literature, Steven Engelbourg 54 has concluded that the war economy was neither an impetus to the reorganization of the labour process nor to increased output in strategic industries. On the other hand, wartime inflation did provide a powerful lever for changing the relationship between merchant and industrial capital. As Livesay and Porter have pointed out, 55 manufacturers' 'profit inflation'—manifested in an increased cash-flow and combined with wartime rationalization of the currency system—allowed the industrialists to liquidate their debts to merchants and break their financial dependence upon merchant capital (while at the same time opening up room for the proliferation of new banking capital).

But the direct economic impact of the war on industrial capitalism was secondary to the war's political effects on capitalist development through the remainder of the nineteenth century. As Stephen Salsbury⁵⁶ one of Cochran's earliest critics—pointed out, the central thesis of Beards and Hacker was that the Civil War constituted a second phase of the American bourgeois revolution, which consolidated the hegemony of industrial capital at the level of the state. Salabury emphasized that Cochran's claims that the war retarded industrial capitalist development only confused the economic stimulants or obstacles to industrial expansion posed by the war economy with the changes in political class relations and state policies that resulted from the victory of industrial capital. The effects of these political changes on the accumulation of capital are seen in the comparisons Salsbury made, again using Gallman's statistics, between the rate of growth of production in iron, coal and railroad lines in the decades before and after the Civil War. In all three branches of production the growth rate in the decade 1865-1875 was considerably higher than in the decade 1850-1860. From these comparisons, Salsbury asserted that the state policies implemented by the industrial-capitalist-led Republican bloc during the war removed obstacles and provided a powerful impetus to the expanded reproduction of capital.

⁵³ Reprinted in Nash

⁵⁴ The major contributions to this debate were republished in R. Adreano (ed.), *The Economic Impact of the Civil War*, Boston 1966 See also S. Engelbourg, "The Economic Impact of the Civil War on Manufacturing Enterprises," *Bannets History* 20, 2 (July 1979). ⁵⁵ Livesay and Porter, pp. 116–30.

⁵⁶ S. Salsbury, "The Effect of the Civil War on American Industrial Development", in Nash.

What were the state policies implemented by the Republican industrial bourgeoisie during the Civil War and how did they secure the conditions for the expanded reproduction of capital in the United States? The first was the abolition of slavery, a measure forced upon the industrial bourgeoisie by military exigencies and the struggle of the slaves. Although the class struggles in the reconstruction period did not result in emergence of either capitalist plantation agriculture or the formation of a black petty-bourgeois farmer class; the non-capitalist form that did replace slavery, sharecropping, did not pose an obstacle to the development of capitalism outside of the cotton South. While sharecropping did pose definite limits to the transformation of the labour process, it did not have plantation slavery's geographically imperialist tendencies, which had posed an obstacle to the Western expansion of petty-commodity production. Sharecropping also eliminated plantation 'self-sufficiency', making the direct producers more dependent on commodity circulation for their reproduction and deepening the social division of labour in the South.57

While the abolition of slavery removed the obstacles presented by the expansion of the slave form; the Homestead Act, protective tariff and liberalized immigration laws provided a powerful impetus to the capitalist accumulation of capital. The passage of the Homestead Act of 1862 did not provide the agrarian petty-bourgeoisie with its long hoped for utopia of free land to the tiller and an end to land speculation and engrossment. The portions of the public domain reserved for free settlement tended to be of the worst soil quality and distant from the railroads. The railroads, on the other hand, were given, under the provisions of the Homestead and corollary land-grant acts, large alternating blocks of the public domain along their routes, while the Federal government reserved the other blocks of land for sale at public auction. This plundering of the public domain through huge land grants to railroads and mining companies, and the sale of government land at public auction, provided a tremendous lever for the commodification of the land and created a permanent obstacle to 'natural economy'. 58 The massive home market created by the expansion of petty-commodity production, the largest in the capitalist world economy, was unified by a transcontinental railroad system and monopolized for American industrial capital by the protective tariffs passed during and after the Civil War. Liberalized immigration laws allowed the continual inflow of European and Asian immigrants, who supplemented the industrial proletariat and reserve army of labour. By the end of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the conditions for the dominance of specifically capitalist production were secured. The Civil War and Reconstruction thus marked the end of the us social formation's 'phase of transition', dominated by the process of primitive accumulation, and the beginning of the phase of industrial capitalist expansion, dominated by the capitalist accumulation of capital.

⁵⁸ Paul Gates, "The Homestead Act in an Incongruous Land System", in Scheiber.

⁵⁷ On the dynamics of sharecropping, see Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom The Economic Consequences of Emeripation, New York 1977, and Jon Weiner, 'Class Structure and Economic Development in the American South, 1865–1955', American Historical Review 84, 4 (October 1974).

On the Political Economy of the Socialist Transformation

There are many questions which refuse a reassuring answer. This is no less true within socialist theory. The issue of whether socialists and Marxists should work within the Labour Party has preoccupied the British Left throughout this century. The Social Democratic Federation decided to disaffiliate in the early 1900s. The question of affiliation to the Labour Party took up half the agenda of the founding conference of the Communist Party in 1920. In 1932 the Independent Labour Party broke away from the mass organization it had fathered. In the late 1960s, with both student and working-class disillusionment with the Labour Government of Harold Wilson, the issue seemed finally to be resolved: Labour was finished as a socialist party. After decades of 'entryism', most of the major Far Left groups left the Party. Thousands of other socialists also moved out in disgust. After the May 1968 events in France the hope was for a similar revolutionary upsurge in Britain: which would be bound to bypass the Labour Party. By 1970 a large section, perhaps the majority, of the Left in Britain had dismissed the possibility of

'entryism'into the Labour Party; such a strategy had been rejected. Three years later, the second edition of Ralph Miliband's Parliamentary Socialism appeared, suggesting that the attempt to transform Labour into a socialist party should be abandoned. Against this tide of opinion, Ken Coates responded with a brilliant theoretical testament which still remains highly relevant. At about this time the ongoing shift to the Left within the Labour Party came to public attention, and the question of working within the Labour Party re-emerged. Thus the debate re-ignited by Ralph Miliband and Ken Coates continues to this day. A mark of its renewed strength was the fact that the 'Debate of the Decade', organized in London in 1980, was almost totally preoccupied with the question which had been summarily dismissed ten years before.

In the 1970s another debate re-emerged. It had been commenced with the posthumous publication of the third volume of Marx's Capital in 1894, six years before the birth of the forerunner of the modern Labour Party. The debate concerned the theory of value, Marx's theory of the falling rate of profit, and the nature of the capitalist system. Initially, Böhm-Bawerk and Hilferding were the main protagonists. In the 1970s, quite different opinions were involved. Apart from the remarkable synchronization of their emergence and re-emergence, what did these two debates have in common? Surely, it may be asked, they involve quite separate issues?

I do believe that questions of Marxist economic theory have a certain autonomy from the more immediate question of political strategy. It would be a mistake to suggest an automatic, or one-to-one relationship between theory and strategy; they operate at quite different levels of abstraction and involve different degrees of judgement and uncertainty. However, in two of the more recent contributions to the debate on the Labour Party the issues have become entwined. I refer to the article by David Coates and his recent book on the Labour government of 1974–79. Implicitly in the former, and explicitly in the latter, the two debates are merged. His critique of the Alternative Economic Strategy of the Labour Left, and his arguments for remaining outside of the Labour

¹ R. Miliband, Parhamentary Socialism, London, 1973

² K. Coates, 'Socialists and the Labour Party', Swedist Register 1975; reprinted in K. Coates, Beyond Wage Sherery, Nottingham, 1977

³ D. Coates, The Labour Party and the Straggle for Socialism, London, 1973, R. Millband, 'Moving On', Socialist Register 1976, P. Jenkins, 'The Labour Party and the Politics of Transition', Socialist Register 1977; L. Panitch, 'Socialists and the Labour Party: A Reappraisal', Socialist Register 1979; D. Coates, Labour in Parist', London, 1980; M. Rustin, 'Different Conceptions of the Party: Labour's Constitutional Debates', New Left Review 126, March—April 1981; D. Coates, 'Labourism and the Transition to Socialism', New Left Review 129, September—October 1981, E. Hobsbawm et al, The Fernard March of Labour Halitel', Verso, London, 1981.

⁴ See the transcript of this debate: P. Hain (ed.), The Debate of the Decode, London, 1980.
⁵ See P. Sweezy (ed.), Karl Marx and the Close of His System, London, 1975.

⁶ I refer to those influenced by the seminal work of Piero Sraffa. See I Steedman, Marx After Sraffa, Verso, London, 1981, I Steedman, P. Sweezy, et al, The Value Controvers, Verso, London, 1981; G. Hodgson, Capitalism, Value and Explanation, Oxford, 1981. E. Mandel's recently-published introduction to the new Penguin/New Left Review edition of Capital, Volume 3, is unfortunate for it includes no direct reply to the substantive points in the Sraffa-based criticism of Marx.

⁷ D. Coates, 'Labourum and the Transition to Socialism', op. cit., hereafter LTS; and Labourum Parent, hereafter LP.

Party, are based on a specific conception of class struggle and capitalist development. It is to Coates' merit that the latter has become clearly explicit for the first time.

There are four important theoretical assumptions which underlie David Coates' argument. Three of them relate directly to the debate on the nature and trajectory of the capitalist system to which I have referred. It is beyond the scope of this article to survey this latter debate here, or to support in detail the alternative position that I hold. Where possible I shall refer the reader to the more important and useful discussions of the issues.

The Underlying Assumptions

Coates' analysis of 'the determinants of Labour politics' is based on the following four assumptions.

- (1) There is an 'inexorable tendency under capitalism' for the organic composition of capital to increase, leading to a tendency for the rate of profit to fall. In particular, in Britain, this 'law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall' explains 'the serious crisis of profits in British manufacturing industry since the mid-1960s'.
- (2) Contrary to many advocates of the Alternative Economic Strategy, 'at this stage of late capitalism at least, it is just not possible to strengthen the competitive position of national capitalism and the power of the labour movement simultaneously'. 'A capitalist crisis "resolved" in favour of the working class would be a capitalism in greater crisis, not a capitalism restabilized'. 'I The 'interests of capital and labour are not simply different (they) are mutually incompatible'. 'I In other words, the class struggle under capitalism is a zero-sum game in which one class gains at the expense of the other. It is not possible for both capitalists and workers to gain from reforms. Because 'the Labour Left's analysis is insufficiently developed to recognize this, their resulting political practice must in the end fall foul of incompatibilities whose centrality they have failed to grasp'. 13
- (3) It is not possible 'at this stage of late capitalism to implement a programme of democratic reform while simultaneously reconstituting the growth rate and competitive strength of an economy still predominantly in capitalist hands'. ¹⁴ As a consequence, and in the absence of the most widespread and radical support, the Alternative Economic Strategy will quickly degenerate into a corporatist politics 'of "temporary" working class restraint in the name of socialism, of job loss . . . and of cuts in social expenditure to leave "space" for private capital accumulation'. ¹⁵ Short of expropriating the expropriators, ¹⁶ any Left Labour government of the future will end up taking measures of austerity against the working class and moving, not towards socialism, but towards an undemocratic corporatist capitalism. Bluntly, 'effective

reforms from within the existing set of property relationships are impossible'.17

(4) 'To join and spend time working inside the Labour Party is to lend credibility to the whole Labourist tradition, to the ultimate detriment of any strategy for socialism that sees the shedding of labourist illusions as a vital precondition for its own success'. 18 The function of these illusions is to sustain the Labour Party which, instead of wholly serving workingclass interests, diverts working-class aspirations from desirable and class-based goals. Coates approvingly quotes the following words from a book by Leo Panitch: 'the function of the Labour Party in the British political system consists not only of representing working-class interests but of acting as one of the chief mechanisms for inculcating the organised working class with national values and symbols and of restraining and reinterpreting working-class demands in this light'. 19

These four underlying assumptions relate to what Coates calls the 'crucial question': 'Just how much economic and political space is there for effective reformism? 20 His answer is plain: little or none. The only way in which sufficient 'space' can be created for an effective Left strategy is by 'extensive public ownership under workers' control' and a dismantling of the 'senior administrative and coercive institutions of the state'. 21

A Tendency to Profit From a Fallen Theory

Turning to Coates' first underlying assumption, it is clearly beyond the scope of this essay to go into all the arguments for and against the theory of the falling rate of profit here. Although it is clear that the balance of argument has shifted in favour of the critics of the theory during the 1970s, its supporters have by no means conceded defeat. However, such a decisive outcome is very rare in the history of economic thought. Old theories, like the neoclassical theory of distribution based on the aggregate production function, have a way of carrying on after devastating criticism, thus enjoying an unending 'life after death'. I believe that this is the situation with the 'law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall', which has been extensively criticized on empirical and theoretical grounds. 22 Coates adopts the practice of assuming the validity of this 'law' without responding to any one of these serious criticisms. But, search the literature as you will, no one has successfully demonstrated that there is a reliable and general mechanism for the organic composition of capital to necessarily increase under capitalism, nor is there any clear emperical evidence of its sustained increase over the last sixty years.

However, Coates does more than simply assuming that the 'law' is valid. He asserts that it provides a convincing explanation of the crisis in Britain

¹⁸ LTS, p. 22.

¹⁹ L. Pannch, Social Democracy and Industrial Military, London, 1976, quoted in LP, p. 160.

²¹ LTS, p. 20

²² See my earlier article: 'The Theory of the Falling Rate of Profit', New Left Review 84, March-April 1974, and, more recently, P. Van Panja, 'The Falling-Rate-of-Profit Theory of Crisis: A Rational Reconstruction by Way of Ohituary', The Revers of Radical Political Economics, Spring 1980, for a rigorous and critical survey of defences of the theory, and a full bibliography.

and the evident fall of the rate of profit on British capital in the last 20 years. Let there be no confusion here: if the rate of profit falls it does not mean that Marx's 'law' is validated. Marx asserts that the rate of profit necessarily falls as a result of the value of the machinery and materials used in production growing faster than the value of labour-power; 'this gradual growth in the constant capital, in relation to the variable, must necessarily result in a gradual fall in the general rate of profit. 23 This faster growth in constant capital (i.e. value of machinery, etc.) results from 'the progressive development of the social productivity of labour, 24 'the accumulation of capital, in terms of both mass and value²⁵ and the 'development of the productive forces'. 26 It is clear, even from these short quotations, that Marx's theory does not apply to the situation in Britain in recent years. Britain today is not the country where the productive forces under capitalism have been pushed to their most advanced limit. (In contrast, when Capital was being written Britain was the most advanced capitalist country.) It is clear, from a casual examination of the statistics, that the 'social productivity of labour' in Britain is much lower than in France, West Germany or the United States. 27 Furthermore, the amount of machinery per worker, measured in either value or volume terms, is much lower in Britain than its more advanced capitalist competitors. 28 The scenario in Capital of a fall in the rate of profit coming about at the most advanced stage of capitalist development would apply more to the United States and to continental Western Europe than to Britain; if it applied at all.

Studies of the actual fall of the rate of profit in Britain in recent years show that the sharp decline in profitability does not result from an increase in the organic composition of capital á la Marx. Andrew Glyn and Bob Sutcliffe have shown that the fall in the rate of profit in Britain can be explained by an increase in the share of net output going to wages (before tax) at the expense of profits. 29 In other words, the fall in the rate of profit has resulted from a decline in the rate of exploitation, not a rise in the organic composition of capital. This is a quite different explanation from that involved in Marx's 'law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall', as Andrew Glyn and John Harrison make absolutely clear. 30 Coates is keen to point out the role that the manifest 'defensive strength' of the working class has played in the development of the British politico-economic crisis, but does not seem to realize that this makes an explanation based on Marx's law of the falling rate of profit redundant. And a conjunctural explanation of the crisis, based on the dynamics of class struggle and power, rests unessily with the rather mechanistic and deterministic vision within Marx's law, of capitalism grinding down a pre-ordained path, by virtue of its inbuilt 'logic', towards an 'inevitable' demise. 31 One cannot

²⁴ Ibid. ²⁵ Op. at., p 364 ²⁶ Op at., p 357

²³ K. Marx, Capital, Vol. 3, Penguin in association with New Left Review, London, 1981, p. 318.

See W. Beckerman, ed., Show Growth in Britain, Oxford, 1979, R. E. Caves and L. B. Krause, Britain's Economic Performance, Washington, 1980
 See F. Blackaby, ed., De-Industrialization, London, 1978

A Glyn and R. Sutcliffe, British Capitalism, Workers and the Profits Squeeze, London, 1972.
 A Glyn and J. Harrison, The British Economic Disaster, London, 1980, pp. 175-7

³¹ It must be noted that Ben Fine and Laurence Harris have a quite different conception of this law, where the counteracting forces are just as significant as the law itself, and the 'law' does not necessarily manifest itself in any empirically-observable tendency for the rate of

resist the temptation to suggest that the 'law' is there, in the imagination of Coates and many others on the Far Left, simply to prevent the proposition that meaningful and substantial reforms are possible under capitalism from establishing itself in the mind.³²

The Class Struggle as a Zero-Sum Game

It has been established above that Coates tends to view the class struggle as a zero-sum game. He is not alone in this: this view is widespread on the Left. It is a see-saw conception; if the position of the workers is to rise, that of the capitalists must fall. It should not be denied that many elements of trade-union and working-class struggle can be accurately described in these zero-sum terms. However, to suggest that this is the whole picture involves an exclusion of structural and other outcomes of the class struggle. To use our analogy: it ignores the possibility that the fulcrum of the see-saw can move. There are certain outcomes that are in the interests of both capitalists and workers, and others (like nuclear war) which are in the interests of neither. Furthermore, the zero-sum conception of class struggle does not square up with the history of industrial capitalism, and its structural changes over the last two hundred years.

Consider, for example, the introduction of full-time school education for children in advanced capitalist countries within the last 120 years. Clearly, this was of some benefit for capitalists in that children were trained in the elementary skills and prepared for the authoritarian discipline of factory work. But, surely, such education was of some benefit for the working class as well, despite its limiting and authoritarian features? Both social classes obtained a net benefit from the reform. A similar argument would apply to the introduction of the National Health Service in Britain in 1946. Capitalism benefits from more healthy workers, but so do the workers themselves. There are other examples of social reforms which would seem to clearly benefit both social classes; including apprentice training schemes and public transport. Other reforms would be favoured by capitalists, as well as workers, in certain circumstances, but not in every case: for example, universal suffrage; the legalisation and recognition of trade unions; and the nationalization of certain basic industries. It could be argued that these latter reforms, and many other similar examples, were in the interests of the working class (whether they were aware of it or not) but may or may not be in the interests of the capitalist class, depending on the balance of class forces, and depending on whether long-run or short-run interests are considered. In any case, it would be wrong to base a political strategy on the supposition that the class

profit to fall. The law is valid, whatever happens in the real world! Needless to say, the Fine-Harris version of the law cannot be invoked to explain the empirical decline of the rate of profit in the British economy any more than it can be used to explain a riting profit rate elsewhere. See B. Pine and L. Harris, 'Controversial Issues in Marxist Economic Theory', Swishir Register 1976; G. Hodgson, 'Papering Over the Cracks', Socialist Register 1977; B. Fine and L. Harris, 'Surveying the Foundations', Swishir Register 1977. For an overview of this debate see D. Cobham's article in the Communist Party Economic Bellitin, No. 4, n.d.. ³² I have heard it argued, by well-known orthodox Marxists, that we cannot reject the theory of the falling rate of profit because, if we did, reformism would be validated. Apart from the invalid identification of reformism with reforms, this appears to put the political cart before the theoretical horse.

pay-offs from reform do, in all cases, sum to zero. Such a circumstance is a fluke rather than the rule.

If this see-saw conception of class struggle is what Coates means by bringing the 'language of class' into mainstream Left politics in Britain then it really will not do. I am not suggesting that class, or class struggle, are redundant notions, but that something much more sophisticated is involved. An example of a much richer, accurate and more useful conception is found in the work of Leclau. 33 In his work there is a recognition that ideological movements and political structures cannot be reduced entirely to class terms (although class relations remain fundamental). In the words of a reviewer of Laclau's work: 'We should not . . . see the relations between social forces simply in terms of classes struggling against each other, battling with their contenting and distinct ideologies. Class is not the only objective category. Political and ideological relations create as an objective category "the people", a social force with a unity of its own. The resolution of a crisis thus demands not only the realisation of class objectives and the satisfaction of class interests; it demands, in addition, the resolution of popular-democratic objectives, for the people have their own interests which require realisation. At the ideological level the basic struggle of the working class consists of linking popular democratic ideologies to its discourse, avoiding both class sectarianism and social-democratic opportunism.'34

I do not wish to re-open some old debates, familiar to readers of this journal in the 1960s, about 'populism' here. But I would suggest that the above remarks would find a strong resonance in the work of E. P. Thompson, both in reference to the early working class struggle for general democratic rights and the defence of the principle of the rule of law, as well as Thompson's more recent and impassioned arguments for the widest possible mobilization against the threat of nuclear war. Opponents of such 'populism' should not, in addition, claim that they speak with the authority of Marx. For, as far as I am aware, there is no work penned by Marx alone which makes a distinction between so-called 'bourgeois' and 'proletarian' democracy, or makes use of these terms at all. The Communist Manifesto, for example, articulates the primary objective of proletarian revolution in universal, not class-specific, terms: 'the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy'.

It is clear from Capital that Marx did not have a zero-sum conception of the class struggle. This can be shown by reference to a number of examples concerning health and factory legislation. For instance, Marx notes the desire of some capitalists to limit child labour, and their reluctance to put this into effect for fear of their competitors. Their desire

³³ E. Laclau, Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory, NLB, London, 1977.

³⁴ P. Jones, 'The People, Democracy and Ideology in Marxist Theory', Marxist Today, February 1978.

³⁵ Respectively, The Making of the English Working Class, London, 1968, White and Hunters, London, 1975, 'Notes on Exterminism, the Last Stage of Civilization', New Laft Researe 121, May-June 1980.

³⁶ See my Socialism and Parliamentary Dismoracy, Nottingham, 1977, for a further discussion of this point.

is thus translated into an appeal for 'some legislative enactment' to apply to all competing firms equally. On the question of the limitation of the working day there is 'a much more striking example' of the cotton manufacturers of Blackburn turning to the workers and offering them financial inducements to 'mount a serious agitation for the 9-hour system'. 37 Marx thus describes certain reforms which cross the boundaries of narrow class interest, as well as recognizing certain universal. 'populist' elements in the socialist goal.

The 'Impossibility' of Reforms

In contrast, in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky there is a quite different emphasis. Borrowing the terminology of Engels, stress is laid on the distinction, and contradiction, between 'bourgeois' and 'proletarian' democracy. The former, as the Second Congress of the Communist International declared, is to be dissolved and replaced by the latter.³⁸ There is even a rejection of the principle of the rule of law. 39 The 'populist' element of socialism almost disappears, and we are presented with a clashing duopoly of class-specific goals and interests. The backdrop to all this is the picture of capitalism in 'decay', having entered its final epoch of decline, 'the epoch of revolution'.40 In these circumstances substantial reforms are 'absolutely incompatible with the objective possibilities of capitalism'. 41 The work of David Coates is descended from this tradition. As we have seen, he dismisses the possibility of 'effective reforms within the existing set of property relationships'. Yet it is now over two-thirds of a century after the epoch of revolution and capitalist decline is supposed to have commenced. And within this period, from 1945 to 1973, world capitalism has had the longest and most virulent boom in its history. In the same three decades, British capitalism expanded at a faster rate than during any other 30 year period. No doubt, however, it will be argued that in the 1970s we have entered another period of capitalist decline, and although reforms were delivered in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, they are now ruled out.

To counter this view, I do not wish to suggest a voluntarist conception of political action, in which, under capitalism, almost anything is possible given the organization, intelligence and will. The economic and political constraints are very real and we should not suggest that massive increases

³⁷ K. Maex, Capital, Vol. 1, Penguln in association with New Laft Raview, London, 1976,

pp. 381-2n.

38 The proletariat needs no parliamentary division of powers, which is harmful to it. The form taken by the proletarian dictatorship is the Soviet republic. Bourgeois parliaments . . . cannot as such be won permanently . . . The communist party does not enter this institution to function there as an organic part of parliament, but in order by action inside parliament to help the masses to shatter the State machine and parliament stuff." Quoted in J. Degras, ed, The Communist International, London, 1971, pp. 152-3, emphasis added.

³⁹ The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is rule won and maintained by the use of violence by the proletanat against the bourgeoisie, rule that is mirestricted by any laws.' V. I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautaky', Collected Works, vol. 28, p.

^{136,} emphasis added.

40 L Trotaky, The First Fire Years of the Communist International, New York, 1972, vol. 1, p. 174 (and elsewhere). The quotation is from a document approved by the Third Comintern Congress.

⁴¹ Degras, op cit., p. 237. See also L. Trotsky, The Death Agent of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, (The Transitional Programme), 1938.

in real income are possible now, within a crisis-ridden capitalism, or even immediately after the abolition of the dominant capitalist relations of production. But it is profoundly mistaken to suggest that incomes cannot increase at all. Furthermore, a large number of significant non-pecuniary reforms are possible, as I shall discuss below. In brief, history indicates that there is no period of capitalist development in which reforms cannot, in principle, be delivered. Their actual delivery depends more on the state of the class struggle, and the relationship of forces between capital and labour, than the economistic indicators of capitalist 'decline', such as the share index or the rate of profit.

The above argument could be substantiated in a number of ways, but I shall concentrate here on matters of prime relevance to Britain. We have already noted that the average productivity of labour in Britain is much lower than in the United States, France and West Germany. If productivity were to increase to Continental and American levels then large increases in wages would be possible without, necessarily, a reduction in the rate of profit. 42 As I have pointed out elsewhere, 43 orthodox economic theory pays insufficient attention to the phenomenon of variable productivity, treating production, in Bob Rowthom's words, as 'an asocial or natural process in which inputs of labour, land and means of production, misleadingly described as capital, are mysteriously transformed into outputs'. 44 According to this scheme of things, the final level of output is determined entirely by the 'production function' and the provided 'factors of production' which enter as 'inputs'. Social relations within production, and the difference between provided labour-power and performed labour are ignored. 45 As a consequence, it is quite possible to assume away differences of productivity which, in reality, habitually occur with identical equipment and machinery, and similar employment of labour-power. This practice is so common in economic theory that I hesitate to give examples. 46 What is most important here, of course, is to situate this issue in relation to the currrent discussion of socialist strategy. In that context I can think of no clearer example than that provided by Adam Przeworski in a recent issue of this journal. Przeworski writes: 'without nationalization of the means of production, increases of productivity require profitability of private enterprise. As long as the process of accumulation is private, the entire society is dependent upon maintaining private profits and upon the actions of capitalists allocating these profits.... The very capacity of social

⁴³ See my Labour at the Crassroads, Oxford, 1981, pp. 153-205, and Capitalism, Value and Explosiation, Oxford, 1981, pt. 4.

44 R. Rowthom, Capitalism, Conflict and Inflation, London, 1980, p. 15, formerly published in New Left Research 86. July-Angust 2074

⁴² If the standard capital-output ratios are anything to go by, the 'organic composition of capital' is much legior in the United States, West Germany and France, than it is in the United Kingdom

in New Left Review \$6, July-August 1974.

45 Some writers have recently rejected any distinction between labour and labour-power, e.g. S. Merrett, 'On Labour Power' Economic Ballatin (Communist Party of Great Brituin), No. 4, and I Steedman, 'Marx on Ricardo', University of Manchester Department of Economics Discussion Paper, No. 10 For a critique of this rejection see G. Hodgson op cit.

46 For two examples of the critical impact of the notion of 'variable productivity' see S. Gomulka's critique of the Bacon-Eltis thesis in W. Beckerman (ed.), Slow Gravit in Britani, Oxford, 1979, pp. 178—80, and my critique of the Glyn-Surcliffe thesis in Labour at the Cristroids, pp. 132—7.

democrats to regulate the economy depends upon the profits of capital. This is the structural barrier which cannot be broken: the limit of any policy is that investment and thus profits must be protected in the long run. . . . Suppose that social democrats win elections and attempt to use their position for a democratic transition to socialism.... Hence pressures for a significant improvement of material conditions erupt from several groups. . . . These demands can be financed by (1) a redistribution of personal incomes . . . (2) increased utilization of latent capacity, (3) spending of foreign reserves or borrowing, and/or (4) reduction of the rate of profit. The sum of the first three sources will not be sufficient to satisfy the demands. 47

There we have it! A transitional strategy from capitalism to socialism is confounded by the zero-sum character of the class struggle, operating in distributional terms: if wages are to go up profits must go down. And if profits go down investment is constrained and productivity will fall. The possibility of an increased of productivity without an increase in investment, and with constant or declining profits, is ruled out. The conception of the capitalist economy that is implicit here is far too mechanical, and is refuted by the evidence. First, whilst profits play a central (indicative and active) role in the process of capital accumulation, there is not a direct and automatic relationship between profits and investment, as is often supposed. 48 Second, despite the declining profitability of British capital, the rate of increase of productivity increased steadily from 1955 to 1973. In fact, in the 1969-73 period, productivity growth in Britain was quite high by international standards. 49 Third, there is the dramatic example of the three-day week in early 1974. For six weeks, labour-power and capital equipment were utilized at 60 per cent of the normal rate, yet output was about 90 per cent of its normal level, indicating an immediate jump of labour productivity of 50 per cent.

Clearly, the important consequence of this for the transition to socialism is that sizeable increases in productivity cannot be ruled out; there is not a zero-sum tussle between wages and profits, and substantial reforms can be accommodated by increases of productivity in the transitional period. I do not mean to suggest, however, that the problems raised by Coates and Przeworski are completely without substance. Much of their critique of reformism is valid. There is the probability of resistance and sabotage by the capitalist class, and resources to meet the demands of both investment and increased wages and social services ere constrained. Nevertheless, they both paint a far too mechanical and simplistic picture of the whole economic process, and use their crude economics to rule out any kind of transitional politico-economic strategy. In its place we are left with a vague and improbable 'big bang' theory of socialist revolution, which gives us no strategy for moving from where we are at present, with existing or feasible political resources. I fear that lack of an immediate and realistic strategy for advance, from existing concrete conditions, will

⁴⁷ A. Przeworski, 'Social Democracy as a Historical Phenomenon', Nav Left Rever 122, July-August 1980, pp 55-7.

All See Labour at the Crewroads, pp. 156-7.

⁴⁹ See D. T. Jones, 'Output, Employment and Labour Productivity in Europe', National Institute Economic Review, August 1976.

generate little else but disillusionment and despair. In its absence, neither revolutionary rhetoric or grandiose schemes of capitalist development will do.

I do not suggest that the Labour Party has an adequate politico-economic strategy. At present it has grave weaknesses in the political area, particularly in its failure to discuss the political conditions for, and problems in, the transition to socialism. Not enough weight is given to the military and institutional power of the establishment in Britain, and insufficient attention is given to the international conditions necessary for socialist advance. 50 The Alternative Economic Strategy, whilst being a major achievement of socialist thought, lacks an adequate theoretical basis and is open to varying and sometimes conflicting interpretations. 51 It is, however, possible to develop the Alternative Economic Strategy and enlarge the 'space' for reform which Coates believes is lacking. An element within the Strategy that needs to be emphasized and reinforced is the demand for substantially increased worker participation. This is not a panacea, and the very real dangers of co-option of trades unions or worker representatives have to be spelt out and avoided (particularly by a rejection of limited schemes, such as token worker-directors, or workers councils which are not allowed to deal with matters of substance and end up discussing little more than the state of the toilets). The proposals in the 1977 Bullock Report were just about the minimum that were acceptable in present circumstances (they had the strong feature that worker representation was to be based on the existing trade-union organization within the workplaces).

There is a growing quantity of evidence which indicates that substantial increases in productivity are possible with increased worker participation. As Blumberg pointed out several years ago: 'There is hardly a study in the entire literature which fails to demonstrate that satisfaction in work is enhanced or that other generally acknowledged beneficial consequences accrue from a genuine increase in workers' decision making power. Such consistency of findings, I submit, is rare in social research.'52 The overwhelming evidence of a strong positive correlation between workers' participation and productivity covers a number of countries and industries. Strong evidence exists from Chile in 1970-73, Russia in 1917-18, Cuba since 1970, China since 1967, and Yugoslavia since the Second World War. 53 Particular experiments, within capitalist countries, give confirmatory results, e.g. the introduction of limited participation in Texas Instruments, IBM-France, ICI, AT&T, and others, 54 and several broader studies involving a wider range of worker participation.⁵⁵ Similar positive evidence is found from the numerous

Crisis', Socialist Economic Review 1981.

54 See M Bosquet, "The Meaning of "Job Enrichment", in T Nichols (ed.), Capital and Labour, London, 1980.

⁵⁰ See R. Rowthom, "The Politics of the Alternative Economic Strategy', Marxism Today, January 1981.

51 See A. Sharples, 'Alternative Economic Strategies. Labour Movement Responses to the

⁵² P. Blumberg, Industrial Democracy: The Sociology of Participation, London, 1968, p. 123. 53 See J. G. Espinosa and A. S. Zimbalist, Economic Democracy. Workers' Participation in Children Industry 1970-1973, New York, 1978, pp. 137-61, for references and extensive bibliography, relating to data from many countries

⁵⁵ See Espinosa and Zimbalist, op. cit.

worker cooperatives in Britain, Israel, Spain, the United States, and elsewhere. ⁵⁶

The increasing of productivity through worker participation does not mean traditional 'speed-up' or more tiring or monotonous work. The evidence indicates that the subjective satisfaction of workers is increased, despite the increase in output. Neither does increased productivity mean increased authoritarianism and repression, as both the Far Left and reactionary management quite often suppose. Repressive regimes have shown little success in increasing productivity per hour worked. Their usual tactic, as in Nazi Germany in the 1930s, is to increase the total number of hours worked, both by lengthening the working day and reducing unemployment, and to reduce the level of real wages. Contrary to Glyn and Harrison, Thatcher's monetarism has not been successful in its efforts to raise productivity. Theither is Michael Edwardes, with his authoritarian style of management at British Leyland, the personification of the solution to the problems of British capital.

Joining Labour 'Generates Illusions'

We now turn to the fourth underlying assumption in Coates' essay. It implies a certain image of the manner in which ideologies and practices take hold within the labour movement. It stresses the crucial responsibility that intellectuals and others have in deciding to join, or not to join, the Labour Party. But it would be wrong to suggest that the hold of 'labourist' ideas can be explained in these terms. The ideology and practice of 'labourism' was implanted because of the historical and institutional evolution of the Labour Party itself. The Labour Representation Committee, the forerunner of the Labour Party, was formed as a defensive act, by the trade unions and their allies, to obtain working-class electoral representation in Parliament. The non-hegemonic character of 'labourism', and its inbuilt division between 'trade-union matters' and 'politics', involving a de-politicization of the former and an electoralist conception of the latter, stem from this early history. (I can think of no better account of these historical birthmarks than an essay by Perry Anderson. 58) Taking all this into consideration, it is unlikely that a decision not to join the Labour Party will have any positive effect in getting rid of 'labourist illusions', neither will they be significantly enhanced by taking out a Party card. The only move that is likely to be effective, one way or the other, is a concerted and combined effort by loose groupings of individuals to change the structure, practice and prevailing conceptions of the Labour Party from inside. This is precisely what has been going on within the Labour Party in the last ten years. Although it is a difficult and arduous task, positive changes, some in the glare of national publicity, many more discernible only at ward or constituency level, can already be observed.

The second part of Coates' underlying assumption, supported by Panitch, is that the existence of the Labour Party 'diverts working-class

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ A. Glyn and J. Harrison, The British Economic Disaster, London, 1980, pp. 138–47. See my critique in Labour at the Criticology, ch. 9

⁵⁸ P. Anderson, 'Problems of Socialist Strategy', in P. Anderson and R. Blackburn (eds.), Towards Socialism, London, 1966.

aspirations from desirable and class-based goals'. The implication of this passage is that if the Labour Party did not exist, no such diversion would take place. In turn this implies that there is some sort of immanent inertia in the working class, moving it towards socialism. The agency of a 'revolutionary party' may be required, but nevertheless the inbuilt momentum is there. I suspect that this view of immanent or elemental socialism within the working class pervades a great deal of Marxist thought. How essential it is to Marxism itself I cannot discuss here. But, essential to Marxism or not, it is, I feel, denied by history. The struggles of the working class cannot be justly described solely in socialist or class-centred terms. Consequently, if it is asserted that the Labour Party has diverted the working class from 'its' goals, it cannot simply be assumed that these goals are socialist or even politically desirable in themselves. I do not wish to suggest that the working class has an inbuilt momentum towards other, less desirable goals. What I reject is the notion of pre-destined class objectives. 59 This is not an argument for despair. Neither does it undermine the socialist goal. It can still be argued that socialism is a scientific, rather than a utopian doctrine. The material preconditions of socialism are not simply the existence of the working class. There are other preconditions as well, including democratic structures, embryonic public regulation and enterprise, and trade union and other organization. It is in these terms that Labour's record should be judged.

The balance-sheet is not one-sided. There is considerable weight in the argument, made by Coates, Miliband, Panitch and many others, that the experience of two unsuccessful post-1964 Labour governments has done much to discredit the popular image of 'socialism'. Both those governments presided over rapidly increasing unemployment, and when they made attempts to enlarge the public economic domain they were cast in a centralized and corporatist mould. The swingeing attacks of both the 1964-70 and the 1974-79 Labour governments on public expenditure are well known, from the July measures of 1966 to the acceptance of IMF blackmail in December 1976. Also there is the abysmal record in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, in 1964-67 and 1975-78 the trade-union leadership was bought off by small promises, incorporated into the government machine, and turned onto its own membership in an attempt to placate the militancy of the rank and file. For socialists, all these things, and more, go on the debit side of the balance-sheet. What of the credits? These too are substantial. Despite the dismal record of both the 1964-70 and 1974-79 Labour Governments we can list a small number of concrete reforms. These would include the Rent Acts of 1965, 1968 and 1974; the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974, and the Employment Protection Act of 1975. No number of such swallows make a socialist summer; socialism cannot come about merely as a summation of such reforms. But they are real, tangible and beneficial reforms nevertheless. Furthermore, despite the limited effectiveness of the last two mentioned reforms, they

⁵⁹ Undoubtedly the most graphic illustration of the thesis that the working class lacks such immanent goals is the United States. The most pure and most advanced capitalist social formation, relatively free of feudal and absolutist bangovers, has failed to generate any large-scale working-class consciousness, in conventional terms, when so many opportunities have emerged. See J. Karabel, 'The Failure of American Socialism Reconsidered', Secular Register 1979, and M. Davis, 'The Enigma of the US Proletanar', New Left Review 123, September–October 1980.

did a great deal to strengthen and legitimate trade-union organization in the workplace. The temporary incorporation of the trade-union leaderships and the corresponding reduction of strikes in 1975–78, both stressed by Coates and Panitch, make up only half of the extra-parliamentary picture. From 1975 to 1978 total trade-union membership increased by nearly one million: from 53.5 to 57.8 per cent of all persons in employment. ⁶⁰ Since 1960, every year of Labour government has, on the average, brought an *increase* in trade-union density of 1.3 percentage points. Yet, under Conservative governments in the 1960s and 1970s, trade-union density has declined by 0.01 percentage points, on the average, for every year of office. In this respect the advantage of having Labour in office is clear and substantial. The present Conservative government has exacerbated the difference between the two main parties by mounting an economic, legal, and ideological attack on the legitimacy and practices of trade unions.

As to a future Labour government, its trajectory will depend on the character of the Labour Party at the time, and on the extent of mobilized extra-parliamentary support. We cannot state with certainty that credits will outweigh debits. Labour might assume a more bureaucratic form and mimic the more authoritarian practice of West German 'Social Democracy'. That, however, is not the only element to enter the political cost-benefit analysis. One has also to consider the likely short-term political alternatives, and the possibility of an alternative socialist party. As to the former, at present they consist of either destructive monetarism or, on the horizon, a coalition government of the 'centre'. Both of these have awesome consequences for the Left. As to the latter, the repeated and unsuccessful attempts to form a socialist party in Britain outside the Labour Party are well known. There was the Communist Party in the 1920s, the Independent Labour Party in the 1930s, 61 the Revolutionary Communist Party in the 1940s, and a number of other Trotskyist groups since that time. In recent years, in terms of the imperfect index of election results, no such group has managed to raise itself above derisory status. 62 There is no indication that this will change in the next two decades.

Concluding Remarks: Reform and Revolution

It has been noted how Coates has combined an analysis of long-term developments in the capitalist economy with a detailed argument against both 'reformism' and joining the Labour Party. It would be tempting,

⁶⁰ For full figures, and further discussion, see Labour at the Cresswoods, pp. 130-5

⁶¹ A factual error in Coates' article (op. cit p 9) should be corrected. At present the Independent Labour Party does not exist. When the majority of its members re-joined the Labour Party in 1975, after 43 years in the wilderness, the organization was re-named Independent Labour Publications.

⁶² It is important to put things in perspective. In its worst electional performance since 1931, the Labour Party gained 37 per cent of the poll in the 1979 general election. The Communist Party, in the same election, contested 38 sests and walked home with an average of 1.0 per cent of the poll. The Socialist Workers' Party contested the Ladywood by-election in 1977 and got 152 votes. No Trotakyist candidate got more than 500 votes in the 1979 general election. The average Labour vote was 18,000. Even if the Labour Party got as little as 25 per cent of the vote in the next general election, then this would still be much greater than any other rival socialist party. None of the latter is likely to gain a single parliamentary seat, whereas Labour will in all likelihood have over 200 MPs.

therefore, to read this debate with the old conceptual spectacles, and with the old false dichotomies: reform versus revolution, and peaceful versus violent road to socialism. The false counterposition of these alternatives within the socialist movement has done a great deal of damage, and has prevented the exploration of other strategic possibilities. I am not suggesting that Coates' position, which he describes as 'revolutionary' and which is close to classic Leninism and Trotskyism, should be replaced by the tired old formulas of reformist social democracy. 63 In fact, I would argue that concealed within Coates' argument, and the method of his conflation of economics with politics, are significant and unwarranted concessions to reformism. Coates serves out an (incorrect) analysis of inbuilt capitalist decline, deduces from this that effective reforms 'are impossible', and bases his rejection of reformism upon this deduction. In other words, reformism is invalid because effective reforms are impossible. This raises a number of questions. In preceding periods of capitalist development, when it is generally accepted that reforms were possible, was reformism, then, a valid politico-economic strategy? If, today, contrary to Coates' expectation, capitalism delivered substantial reforms, would reformism become valid once more? Implicitly, according to Coates' analysis, and that found within the Trotskyist tradition, 64 the answer to both these questions is 'yes'. In contrast, I would argue that the validity or invalidity of reformism does not depend on the actual or conjectured trajectory of capitalist development. Reformism is invalid, both in periods of boom and periods of slump. Its invalidity does not depend upon the (generally false) assertion that 'reforms are impossible', but on the analysis of the nature of the capitalist state. Reformism is a strategy which considers that a socialist government, acting mainly at the level of the legislature within a capitalist state, has the power on its own, without mass extra-parliamentary struggle and mass extra-parliamentary institutions (such as workers' councils), to build socialism. The possibility or impossibility of reforms has very little to do with it. The key error is to consider Parliament as the apex of effective power. Thus Coates' political economy of the socialist transformation ends up with a weak criticism of the reformism which he, himself, is so keen to dismiss. It would be more fruitful to cast socialist political economy in a different mould: a general analysis of capitalist relations of production and their inbuilt exploitation, 65 a particular analysis of the concrete politico-economic situation, and an analysis of the structures and institutions of the state. 66 Such a comprehensive analysis would provide a far more worthy theoretical foundation than that species of revolutionary opinion which draws its strength from the secret conviction that nothing can be changed.

⁶³ See my Socialism and Parliamentary Democracy.

⁶⁴ See the references and discussion in my Tratiky and Fatalistic Marxism, Nottingham, 1975

¹⁹⁷⁵ 65 The foundation of such an analysis, of course, is Marx's Capital. For attempts to extend this work in a non-fundamentalist manner see my Capitalium, Value and Exploitation, D. Levine, Economic Studies, London, 1977, J. Roemer, Analytical Foundations of Marxien Economic Theory, Cambridge, 1981.

⁶⁶ Work in the Marxist tradition is well known, and expanding rapidly. However, see also C. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets*, New York, 1977; T. Smith, *The Politics of the Corporate Economy*, Oxford, 1979, for useful alternative perspectives.

Introduction to Benjamin

Although Walter Benjamin possessed a profound knowledge of classical German literature, his preoccupation with modernism usually led him to explore more obscure or neglected traditions. Thus he ignored mainstream German drama in favour of Baroque tragedy, because of the relevance of allegory to Expressionism; and his writings on Romanticism pursued a similar strategy. For this reason alone the essay printed here holds special interest, as one of the few exceptions to Benjamin's evasion of the classical tradition.

It was not, however, Benjamin's first study of Goethe. In 1922 he had written an essay on Elective Affinities, publishing it two years later in a review conducted by the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal, the New Dentsche Beitrage. But the contrast between the two compositions could not be more vivid. Where the earlier was arcane and metaphysical, the later was direct and materialist in manner—a tour de force of critical compression. The 'succession' from the first to the second dramatized the profound change that occurred in Benjamin's cultural outlook in the mid twenties—the moment of One-Way Street. Their different publishing histories were equally eloquent. Benjamin's study of Elective Affinities appeared in a little-frequented periodical of pronounced conservative and religious bent; his 'Reluctant Bourgeois' was commissioned for the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia.

Benjamin travelled to the Soviet Union in the winter of 1926/27 in the company of his close friend Asja Lacis and her companion, Bernhard Reich, the theatrical producer. On arriving in Moscow he went with Reich to the offices of the Encyclopaedia and was met by 'a very agreeable young man to whom Reich introduced me and commended my expertise. But when I began to explain my plan for the article, his intellectual insecurity became immediately evident. Much of what I had to say intimidated him and he finally came out with the idea that what he wanted was an account of Goethe's life with a sociological emphasis. At bottom, however, it is only the history of a poet's influence that can be portrayed in terms of materialism, and not his life. For it you abstract from his poetic afterlife, the mere existence of an artist and even his ocuvre, provides nothing for a materialist analysis to bite on.' Despite this inauspicious start, Benjamin was confident that he would receive a series of commissions from the Encyclopaedia. A few weeks later, however, these hopes were dashed when Reich happened to meet Karl Radek in the office of the Encyclopaedia. Radek had been casually looking through Benjamin's text and dismissed it because 'the words "class struggle" occurred ten times on every page'. Reich tried to prove to him that this was not so, but from then on the project was doomed. Benjamin's own final analysis was set out in a letter to Gershon Scholem: 'The abstract of the article which I

submitted turned out to be too radical for them. When faced with the world of European scholarship they are overcome with pity and fear in the classic Aristotelian manner; they want to produce a standard work of Marxist scholarship, but at the same time it has to be something that Europe will wholeheartedly admire.' And in another letter, to Hofmannsthal, he wrote: 'The literary enterprise that I was contemplating on my trip to Moscow has fallen through. The board of the Great Soviet Encyclopadia is a hierarchy with five levels; it contains very few competent scholars and is not remotely capable of carrying out its gigantic programme. I have personally witnessed the ignorance and opportunism with which they oscillate between a Marxist programme of knowledge and the attempt to secure European prestige.'

Benjamin submitted the present essay when it finally appeared in 1929 'in a heavily cut, largely rewritten and mutilated version' that was followed by the names of five co-authors in addition to this it has been estimated that only about 12% of the original text survived. The Soviet authors treated Benjamin's text as merely another secondary source and plundered it for its factual information from which they concocted a more conventional encyclopaedia article. More importantly, they changed its ideological direction. Thus, to take but a few instances, they omitted the passages in which Benjamin analyses the relationship between Goethe and his home town of Frankfurt as well as his social origins. Similarly, the sociological discussion of his marriage to Christiane disappeared, as did the central account of Goethe's science. His subtle and original analyses of works such as Gotz, Worther and Faurt were either grossly simplified or omitted altogether.

Despite Benjamin's scepticism about the possibility of a materialist criticism, it is clear that the question concerned him deeply. The essay attempted no explicit theorization, but its direction is not in doubt. In a brief review in 1932 Benjamin indicated that he saw himself as a successor to Franz Mehring, who had maintained that cultural heritage, 'the noblest possessions of the nation', should be preserved for the proletariat, but in a form purified of bourgeois mystification. But he evidently took a much less adulatory and conservative view of the tradition. Asja Lacis argued that his approach was insufficiently respectful and wanted him to make concessions. Benjamin dismissed this as cowardice and opportunism, and defined his aims in a way that highlighted his debt to Lukács. I talked to her about what was for me the really fascinating thing about the topic of Goethe. It is how a man whose life has been so full of compromise as Goethe's could nevertheless have such extraordinary achievements to his credit. I said that I thought this would be quite unthinkable with a proletarian writer. In this respect the class struggle of the bourgeoisie was fundamentally different from that of the proletariat. Disloyalty" and "compromise" did not automatically mean the same thing in the two movements.' It is this exploration of the tensions in Goethe's life and work that above all distinguishes Benjamin's approach both from Mehring's and from that of the main line of bourgeois scholarship in his day.

R.L.

Goethe: The Reluctant Bourgeois

When Johann Wolfgang Goethe came into the world on 18 August 1749 in Frankfurt-am-Main, the town contained 30,000 inhabitants. In Berlin, the largest town in Germany at the time, there were 126,000, whereas both Paris and London had already surpassed 500,000. These figures are an important signpost to the political situation in Germany, for throughout the whole of Europe the bourgeois revolution depended on the big cities. On the other hand, it is a significant fact about Goethe that during his entire life he never lost a powerful feeling of antipathy towards living in big towns. He never visited Berlin¹ and in later life he paid only two reluctant visits to his native Frankfurt, passing the larger part of his life in a small princely town with 6,000 inhabitants. The only cities he ever became more familiar with were the Italian centres, Rome and Naples. Goethe was the cultural representative and, initially, the political spokesman of a new bourgeoisie, whose gradual rise can be clearly discerned in his family tree. His male ancestors worked their way up from artisan circles and they married women from educated families or families

otherwise higher in the social scale than themselves. On his father's side his great-grandfather was a farrier, his grandfather was first a tailor and then an innkeeper, while his father Johann Caspar Goethe began as an ordinary lawyer. Within a short time, however, he acquired the title of Imperial Councillor and when he had succeeded in winning the hand of Katharina Elisabeth Textor, the daughter of the Mayor, he definitively established his position among the ruling families of the city.

The youth which Goethe spent in a patrician household in a Free Imperial City developed and consolidated in him a trait traditionally found in the Rhenish Franconian region: reserve towards any political commitment and a correspondingly lively appreciation of what was appropriate and advantageous to the individual. His immediate family—Goethe had only one sister, Cornelia—soon permitted him to concentrate on himself. Despite this the attitudes prevailing in the household prevented him from contemplating an artistic career. His father forced him to study law. With this end in view he went first to Leipzig University at the age of sixteen, and in the summer of 1770, to Strasbourg. He was then twenty-one.

I. The Sturm-und-Drang Period

It is in Strasbourg that we first get a clear picture of the cultural milieu from which Goethe's early poetry emerged. Goethe and Klinger from Frankfurt, Bürger and Leisewitz from Central Germany, Voss and Claudius from Holstein, Lenz from Livonia. Goethe was the patrician; Claudius was a burgher. There were the sons of teachers or parsons, like Holtei, Schubart and Lenz; members of the petty bourgeoisse, like Maler Müller, Klinger and Schiller; the grandson of a serf (Voss); and, finally, noblemen like the Counts Christian and Friedrich von Stolberg. They all worked together in an effort to 'renew' Germany by means of ideology. However, the fatal weakness of this specifically German revolutionary movement was its inability to reconcile itself with the original programme of bourgeois emancipation, the Enlightenment. The bourgeois masses, the 'Enlightened', remained separated from their vanguard by a vast abyss. The German revolutionaries were not enlightened and the German enlighteners were not revolutionary. The ideas of the first centred on revolution, language and society, those of the latter focused on the theory of reason and of the state. Goethe subsequently took over the negative side of both movements: together with the Enlightenment he opposed revolution, while with the Sturm-und-Drang he resisted the state. It is in this division within the German bourgeoisie that we find an explanation for its failure to establish ideological contact with the West; Goethe, who subsequently made a detailed study of Diderot and Voltaire, was never further from an understanding of France than when he was in Strasbourg. Particularly revealing is his comment on that celebrated manifesto of French materialism, Holbach's Système de la Nature, a book in which the icy draught of the French Revolution can already be felt. He found it 'so grey, so Cimmerian, so lifeless', that it startled him as if he had seen a ghost. He thought it 'unpalatable, insipid, the very quintessence of senility'. It made him feel hollow and empty in 'this melancholy atheistic gloom'.

¹ Benjamin was in error here: Goethe visited Berlin 16-20 May 1778.

These were the reactions of a creative artist, but equally of a Frankfurt patrician. Goethe subsequently presented the Sturm-und-Drang movement with its two most powerful manifestoes, Götz von Berlichingen and Werther. But it is to Johann Gottfried Herder that these two works owe the universal form which made it possible to fuse their disparate elements into a single ideological whole. In his letters and conversations with Goethe, Hamann and Merck he provided the programme for the movement—the 'original genius'; 'Language: the revelation of the spirit of the people'; 'Song: nature's first language'; 'the unity of human and natural history'. During the same period Herder was busy assembling material for his great anthology of poems, Stimmen der Völker in Liedern (Voices of the Peoples in Song), a collection of poems from Lapland to Madagascar which had the greatest influence on Goethe. For in his own early poetry we find him using the folk-song as a means of revitalizing the lyric in combination with the great liberation that had been effected by the poets of the Göttinger Hain. Voss emancipated the marshland peasantry for poetry. He expelled the conventional figures of the Rococco from poetry with pitch-forks, flails and the Lower Saxon dialect which only half doffs its cap to the squire.' But since the basic mode of Voss's poetry is still descriptive (just as Klopstock poetry is still conceived in terms of the rhetoric of the hymn), it was left to Goethe's Strasbourg poems (Willhommen und Abschied, Mit einem gemalten Band, Mailied, Heidenröslein) to liberate German poetry from the realms of description, didactic message and anecdote. This liberation, however, could still not be anything more than a precarious, transitory phenomenon and one that would lead German poetry into a decline in the course of the nineteenth century, whereas in the poetry of his old age, in the West-Ostlicher Divan, Goethe himself had already introduced conscious restrictions. In 1773, together with Herder, Goethe produced the manifesto Von dentscher Art and Kunst with his study in praise of Erwin von Steinbach, the builder of Strasbourg Cathedral, an essay whose very existence made Goethe's later fanatical classicism an additional source of irritation to the Romantics in their efforts to rehabilitate the Gothic.

This milieu also supplied the matrix for Götz von Berlichingen in 1772. The divided nature of the German bourgeoiste is clearly dramatized in this work. The towns and courts as the representatives of a principle of reason which has been reduced to a coarse expression of Realpolitik, stand for the host of unimaginative Enlighteners; they are opposed by the Sturm-and-Drang in the person of the leader of the insurgent peasantry. The historical background to this work, the German Peasants' War, could easily convey the impression that Goethe had a genuine revolutionary commitment. That would be a mistake, for at bottom what Götz's rebellion expresses are the grievances of the old seigneurial class, the Imperial Knights, who are in the process of surrendering to the growing power of the princes. Götz fights and dies in the first instance for himself, and then for his class. The core idea of the play is not revolution, but steadfastness. Götz's actions are redolent of reactionary chivalry; they are the fine, charming deeds of a seigneur, they are the expression of an individual impulse and not to be seen in the same light as the brutal destructive deeds of the peasant robbers with whom he joins forces. We see in this work the first instance of a process which is to become typical for Goethe: as a dramatist he repeatedly succumbs to the seduction of

revolutionary themes, only to deflect them or to abandon them as fragments. Examples of the first procedure are Götz and Egmont, of the second, The Natural Daughter. Goethe's essential withdrawal from the revolutionary energy of the Sturm-und-Drang movement in his very first important play emerges very clearly from a comparison with the plays of his contemporaries. In 1774 Lenz published The Tutor or The Benefits of a Private Education, a work which mercilessly exposes the social constraints pressing upon the world of letters, constraints of consequence for Goethe's career too. The German middle class was far too weak to be able to support an extensive literary life from its own resources. In consequence, literature's dependence on feudalism persisted even when the writer's sympathies had gone over to the middle class. His penury compelled him to accept free-board, to act as tutor to the children of the nobility and to accompany young princes on their travels. His state of dependence went so far as to jeopardize his literary earnings, since only works expressly named by government decree were protected from pirate editions produced in the various states of Germany.

The Successes of Young Werther

In 1774, after Goethe's appointment to the Imperial Supreme Court of Appeal in Wetzlar, Die Leiden des jungen Wertbers appeared in print. This book may well be the greatest success known to the history of literature. Goethe here perfected the portrait of the writer as 'genius'. For if the great writer is someone who transforms his inner life into a matter of public interest from the very outset and simultaneously makes the questions of the day into matters of immediate concern for his own personal thought and experience, then it is in Goethe's early works that we find the most consummate exemplification of this kind of author. In Wertber Goethe provided the bourgeoisie of his own day with a perceptive and flattering picture of its own pathology, comparable in its way to the one supplied by Freud for the benefit of the modern bourgeoisie. Goethe knitted the story of his unhappy love for Charlotte Buff, the fiancée of a friend, into his account of the adventures in love of a young writer, whose suicide had caused a sensation.

In Werther's moods we see the Weltschwerz of the period unfolding in all its nuances. Werther is not just the unhappy lover whose unhappiness drives him to find a solace in nature which no lover had looked for since the appearance of Rousseau's Nowelle Héloise; he is also the burgher whose pride is wounded battering at the barriers of class and who demands recognition for himself in the name of the rights of man and even of the rights due to any living creature. This is the last occasion for a very long time that Goethe allows the revolutionary element in his youth to have its say. In an early review of a novel by Wieland he had written: 'The marble nymphs, the flowers, vases, the colourfully embroidered cloth on the tables of these nice people—what a high degree of refinement they presuppose, what inequality among the classes, what want where there is so much pleasure, what poverty where the wealth is so great.' In Werther, however, he had already softened his attitude a little: 'Many

² Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem (1747–1772), whom Goethe had known slightly in Leipzig and whose posthumous writings were later edited by Lessing.

things can be said in defence of the Rules [of classical drama], the same things, more or less, that can be said in praise of bourgeois society.' In Worther the bourgeoisie finds the demi-god who sacrifices his life for them. They feel redeemed, without being liberated; hence the protest of Lessing whose class-consciousness was incorruptible. He missed the presence of bourgeois pride as a counterweight to the nobility and called for a cynical conclusion to the book.

After the hopeless complications of his love for Charlotte Buff, the prospect of a bourgeois marriage to a beautiful, impressive and respected Frankfurt girl appeared as a welcome solution. It was a strange decision on the part of the powers whose will governs our lives that the remarkable twists and turns of my life should include the experience of what it feels like to be engaged.' But the engagement to Lili Schönemann turned out to be no more than a tempestuous incident in that war against marriage which he conducted for over thirty years. The fact that Lili Schonemann was probably the most significant woman, and certainly the most liberated one, ever to have had a close relationship with him could ultimately only increase the strength of his resistance to her attempts to bind him to her. In 1775 he made good his escape, undertaking a trip to Switzerland in the company of Graf Stolberg. The outstanding feature of the journey was his meeting with Lavater. In the latter's physiognomical studies, a sensation of the period, Goethe discovered something of his own understanding of nature. In later years Goethe came to dislike the way Lavater found it necessary to synthesize this study of the natural world with his own Pietistic beliefs.

The Weimar Courtier

On the return journey, chance brought about a meeting with Karl August, the Crown Prince and subsequently Duke of Saxe-Weimar. A little after this Goethe accepted the Prince's invitation to his court. What was intended as a visit turned out to be a lifelong stay. Goethe arrived in Weimar on 7 November 1775. In the same year he was made a Privy Councillor with a seat and vote in the Council of State. From the outset Goethe himself viewed his decision to enter into the service of Karl August as a commitment that would change the course of his life. Two factors influenced his acceptance. In an age when the German bourgeoisie harboured increased political expectations, his position at court allowed him close contact with the realities of politics. On the other hand, as a high official in a bureaucratic apparatus he was relieved of the need to take any radical steps. For all his inner uncertainty of mind this position did at the very least provide him with an outward support for his self-confidence and his actions. The heavy price he had to pay was something he could have learned about easily enough from the questioning, disappointed and indignant voices of his friends, had his own incorruptibly alert self-knowledge not kept it permanently before his mind. Klopstock and even Wieland, like Herder later on, took offence at the generous spirit in which Goethe acceded to the demands of his position, and even more to the demands made on him by the personality and mode of life of the Grand Duke. For, as the author of Goty and Werther, Goethe represented the bourgeois fronds. And his name meant all the more as the tendencies of the age were barred from almost every means of expression other than the

personal and individual. In the eighteenth century an author was still a prophet and his works the keystone to a gospel which seemed most perfectly expressed by his life. The immeasurable personal prestige which Goethe's first works had brought him they were received as revelations—evaporated in Weimar. But since people were unwilling to think of him as being anything other than larger than life, the most nonsensical legends about him began to take shape. He was said to be getting drunk on brandy every day, Herder was alleged to be preaching in boots and spurs and riding three times round the church after the sermon—this was how people imagined the wild escapades of those first months in Weimar. Of greater consequence, however, was the friendship between Goethe and Karl August, the foundations for which were laid during this period and which subsequently provided Goethe with the guarantee of a comprehensive intellectual and literary sovereignty: the first such universal European dominion since Voltaire. 'As for the judgment of the world', the nineteen-year-old Karl August wrote at the time, 'which might disapprove of my installing Dr. Goethe in my most important Council without his having already achieved the status of magistrate, professor, chamberlain or state councillor—none of that will deter me in the least.'

The suffering and the inner conflict of these first Weimar years were given new shape and sustenance in Goethe's love for Charlotte von Stein. An examination of the style of the letters he wrote to her in the years from 1776 to 1786 reveals the steady transition from Goethe's earlier revolutionary prose, a prose 'which cheated language of its privileges', to the great composed rhythms of the letters which he dictated for her in Italy between 1786 and 1788. As for their content, they are the most important source of our knowlege of the difficulties the young poet experienced in coming to terms with the business of administration and, above all, with the court society. By nature Goethe was not always very adaptable.

He wished to become so, however, and kept a close watch on 'the so-called men of the world to see how they did it'. And in fact it was not possible to conceive of a harder school than his relationship with Charlotte which, given the small town environment, was inevitably highly exposed. An added factor was the circumstance that Charlotte von Stein, even in the years when she was in such profoundly intimate communion with Goethe's world, was never prepared to flout the rules of courtly decorum. It took years before Charlotte could acquire such an unshakeable and propitious place in his life that her image could enter his work in the figure of Iphigenie and of Eleonore d'Este, Tasso's beloved. The fact that he proved able to put down roots in Weimar in the way he did is very closely bound up with his relationship to Charlotte von Stein. Through her he came to know not just the court, but also the town and the countryside. Alongside all the official memoranda there is a constant stream of more or less hasty notes to Frau von Stein in which Goethe appears, as was his practice as a lover, in the full range of his talents and activities: as sketcher, painter, gardener, architect, and so on. When in the course of his account of Goethe's life in 1779, Riemer relates how Goethe spent a month and a half travelling around the Duchy, inspecting the roads by day, taking part in recruiting young men for military service in

the evenings and resting at small inns and working on *Iphigenis* at night, he provides us with a miniature portrait of this critical and in many ways threatened phase of Goethe's life.

The poetic yield of these years includes the beginnings of Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission, Stella, Clavigo, Worther's Letters from Switzerland, Tasso and above all a large part of his most powerful lyric poetry: Harzesise im Winter, An den Mond, Der Fischer, Nur wer die Sebnsucht kennt, Über allen Gspfeln, Gebeimnisse. Goethe also did some work on Fanst during these years and even laid the inner foundations for parts of Fanst II, to the extent at least that it was in the experiences of these first Weimar years that we find the origins of Goethe's nihilistic view of the state which was to be so bluntly expressed later in Act II. In 1781 we find him saying: 'Our moral and political world is undermined by subterranean galleries, cellars and sewers, as often occurs in a great city when there is no one to think about and concern himself with its needs and with the conditions of the inhabitants; only, for anyone who has got wind of the situation it will come as no very great surprise if one day the earth caves in, if smoke . . . rises up in one place and strange voices are heard in another.'

Every step which strengthened Goethe's position in Weimar increased the distance between himself and the friends and associates of his youth in Strasbourg and Wetzlar. The incomparable authority which had accompanied him to Weimar and which he had brought to bear to such effect in the court, was based on his role as leader of the Sturm-und-Drang. In a provincial town like Weimar, however, this was a movement which could only make a brief appearance and, since it was prevented from bearing any fruit, it was forced to remain at the level of tumultuous extravaganza. Goethe saw this quite clearly from the outset and did everything in his power to prevent any attempts to transplant Strasbourg ways to Weimar. In 1776 when Lenz appeared in Weimar and behaved at court in the style of the Sturm-und-Drang, Goethe had him expelled. That was political expediency. But to an even greater degree it was an instinctive reaction against the boundless impulsiveness and the emotional extravagance implicit in the life-style of his youth which he felt himself unable to contain in the long run. Among his associates at that time he had experienced the most egregious examples of scandalous behaviour, and a statement of Wieland's from that period gives us a glimpse of the devastating effects on him of his association with such people. Wieland wrote to a friend saying that he would not like to purchase Goethe's fame if the price he had to pay was the latter's physical sufferings. In later years, then, the poet took the strictest prophylactic measures to protect his constitutional sensitivity. Indeed, when we observe the precautions Goethe took to avoid certain tendencies—all forms of nationalism and most of Romanticism, for example—we are forced to conclude that he was afraid they might be directly contagious. The fact that he wrote no tragic work is something he himself attributed to that same frailty of constitution.

II. The Flight from Politics

The more Goethe's life in Weimar approached a certain state of equilibrium—in external terms his acceptance into court society was

completed in 1782 by his elevation into the nobility—the more unbearable he found the town. His impatience took the form of a pathological irritation with Germany. He talks of writing a work which the Germans would hate. His antipathy goes even deeper. After a two year long youthful enthusiasm for German Gothic, landscape and chivalry, Goethe began to discover in himself a resistance to the climate and landscape, the history, politics and nature of his own people, a resistance which came from his innermost being. This mood began to take shape vaguely and unclearly at the age of twenty-five; it gradually became clearer, and then a matter of passionate conviction, culminating in a definite view systematically rationalized. It found dramatic expression in 1786 in Goethe's abrupt departure for Italy. He himself described his journey as a flight. He was so oppressed by tensions and superstitious feelings that he had not ventured to divulge his plans to anyone.

In the course of this journey which lasted two years and which took him to Verona, Venice, Ferrara, Rome and Naples and down to Sicily, two issues were resolved. The first was that Goethe renounced his hopes of committing himself to a life based on the plastic arts. This was an idea he had repeatedly entertained. If Goethe had unconsciously acquired the image of a dilettante in the eyes of the nation, an image which he was for a long time reluctant to discard, one of the causes of this, as well as of the many instances of uncertainty and carelessness in his literary works, was his hesitation about the nature of his gifts. So as to smooth his way as a poet, he all too often allowed his genius to degenerate to a mere talent. The experience of the great art of the Italian Renaissance which Goethe, gazing at it through Winckelmann's eyes, was unable to distinguish from that of Antiquity, laid the foundations, on the one hand, for the conviction that he was not meant to be a painter, while on the other, it supplied the basis for that narrow classicistic theory of art which is perhaps the only sphere of thought in which Goethe lagged behind his age, rather than taking the lead. There was yet another sense in which Goethe may be said to have rediscovered his true self. In a letter home, he says, referring to the Weimar court: 'The illusion that the fine seeds that are ripening in my life and in those of my friends had to be sown in that ground and that those celestial jewels could be made to fit into the earthly crowns of these princes, has now been completely dispelled, and I discover my youthful happiness wholly restored.'

In Italy the prose draft of *Iphigenie* gave way to the definitive version. In the following year, 1788, Goethe completed *Egmont*. *Egmont* is no political drama, but a character study of the German tribune that Goethe, as the spokesman of the German bourgeoisie, might at a pinch have become. The only trouble with it is that this portrait of the fearless man of the people is all too idealized and this in turn lends greater force to the political realities uttered by Alba and William of Orange. The concluding phantasmagoria—'Freedom clad in a celestial gown, bathed in light, rests upon a cloud'—unmasks the supposedly political ideas of Count Egmont and reveals them as the poetic inspiration they fundamentally are. Goethe inevitably had a very limited view of the revolutionary freedom movement which broke out in the Netherlands in 1566 under the leadership of Count Egmont. His vision was obscured in the first place by

a social milieu and a personal temperament for which the conservative notions of tradition and hierarchy were inalienable; and in the second place, by his basic anarchistic attitude, his inability to conceive of the state as a historical reality. For Goethe history represented an unpredictable sequence of cultures and forms of rule in which the only fixed points were great individuals such as Caesar and Napoleon, Shakespeare and Voltaire. He was never able to bring himself to believe in national or social movements. It is true that he was unwilling on principle to make a general statement about such matters, but this is the view that emerges both from his conservations with Luden, the historian, and also from Wilbelm Meister's Wanderings and Faust. It is such convictions as these that determine his relationship with the dramatist Schiller. For Schiller the. problem of the state had always been a matter of central importance. The state in its relations to the individual was the subject of his early plays; the state in its relations to the representatives of power was the theme of the works of his maturity. In contrast, the driving force in Goethe's dramas is not conflict but a process of unfolding.

The chief lyrical product of the Italian period was the Roman Elegiss, a collection of poems which preserve the memory of many Roman nights of love in verses which are remarkable for their classical definition and perfection of form. The heightened sensual intensity of his nature now drove him to the decision to concentrate his energies and henceforth to confine himself to more limited commitments. While still in Italy Goethe wrote the Duke 2 letter which shows his diplomatic style at its best, asking to be relieved of all his political and administrative duties. His request was granted, but despite this it was only after lengthy detours that Goethe found his way back to intensive literary production. The chief cause of the delay must be sought in his preoccupation with the French Revolution. In order to understand his attitude here—as with his scattered, disconnected and impenetrable utterances on political matters—it is less important to make a synthesis of his theoretical improvisations than to consider their function.

Between Absolutism and Revolution

It is beyond all doubt that after his experience as a Privy Councillor in Weimar and long before the outbreak of the French Revolution, Goethe found the enlightened despotism of the eighteenth century problematic in the extreme. Nevertheless, he proved unable to reconcile himself to the Revolution. This was not just because of his temperamental attachment to the feudal regime, or even because of his fundamental opposition to any violent upheavals in public life, but because he found it difficult and even impossible to arrive at any considered views on political issues. If he never made the clear statement on the 'limits of the efficacy of the state' that we find for example in Wilhelm von Humboldt, the reason was that his political nihilism was too extreme to enable him to do more than drop inconclusive hints. It is enough to note that Napoleon's intention of dividing the German people up into its original tribes held no terrors for Goethe, who regarded such perfect fragmentation as the outward manifestation of a community in which great individuals could demarcate their own spheres of activity—a realm in which they could exercise patriarchal sway and communicate with each other down the ages and across the frontiers of the state. It has been rightly said that for Goethe, who was himself the incarnation of a Gallicized Franconia, the Germany of Napoleon supplied the environment that suited him best. But in his relationship to the Revolution we must also take note of the effects of his hypersensitivity, the pathological state of shock induced in him by the great political events of his age. This shock, the effect of certain episodes in the French Revolution as well as of personal blows of fate, made the idea of re-ordering the world of politics purely on the basis of principles as inconceivable to him as applying such principles in order to regulate the private existence of individuals.

In the light of the class antagonisms existing in Germany at the time we may interpret this in the following way: unlike Lessing, Goethe felt himself to be less the champion of the middle classes than their deputy, their ambassador to German feudalism and the princes. His constant vacillation may be explained in terms of the conflicts arising from his position as representative. The greatest representative of classical bourgeois literature—the only indisputable claim of the German people to the honour of being admitted to the ranks of modern cultured nations—was himself unable to conceive of bourgeois culture outside the framework of a perfected feudal state. Of course, if Goethe rejected the French Revolution, this was not just so as to defend feudalism—the patriarchal idea that every culture, including bourgeois culture, could only thrive under the protection of and in the shadow of the absolute state. Of equal importance was the petty-bourgeois motive, the efforts of the private individual who anxiously seeks to seal off his life and protect it from the political upheavals all around. But neither the spirit of feudalism nor that of the petty bourgeoisie sufficed to make his rejection absolute and unequivocal.

It is for this reason that not a single one of the literary works in which he sought over a period of ten years to come to terms with the Revolution. can be assigned a central place in his overall output. Between 1792 and 1802 there are no fewer than seven works in which Goethe attempted again and again to arrive at a compelling formula or a definitive portrait. These included in the first place occasional pieces such as the Grand Cophta or The Agitated (Die Ansgeregten), which mark the nadir of Goethe's achievement, or else as in The Natural Daughter, efforts that were doomed to remain fragments. In the end, however, Goethe came closest to his goal in two works in both of which the Revolution is treated, as it were, en bagatelle. Hermann und Dorothea reduces it to a sinister backcloth which serves as a useful foil to an attractive German small town idyll; Reynard the Fox (Reineke Fuchs) dissolves the pathos of the Revolution into a verse satire in which it is no coincidence that Goethe reverts to the medieval genre of the animal epic. The Revolution as background to a moralistic genre scene—that is the method of Hormann and Dorothea; the Revolution as comic intrigue, as an intermezzo in the animal history of mankind—that is his approach in Remard the Fox. It is by such methods that Goethe overcomes the traces of resentment that are evident in his earlier attempts in this direction, above all in the Conversations of German Émigrés (Unterbaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten). But the notion that has the last word here is the hierarchical, feudal belief that the high point of human history discovers mankind assembled around the person of the monarch. Despite this, it is the king in The

Natural Danghter who makes Goethe's failure to comprehend political history so palpably plain. He is the King Thous of Iphigenie in a new garb, the king as 'the good man', who, when transported into the upheavals of the Revolution, must inevitably be found wanting.

The Sanctuary of Science

The political problems which the 1790s imposed on Goethe's production explain why he made a series of efforts to escape from literature. His chief refuge was the study of science. Schiller clearly perceived the escapist character of Goethe's scientific preoccupations in these years. In 1787 he wrote to Körner: 'Goethe's mind has moulded all the people who belong to his circle. A proud philosophical contempt for all speculation and investigation together with an attachment to nature bordering on affectation and a retreat to knowledge as vouchsafed by his five senses; in short, a certain childlike simplicity of mind characterizes him and his whole sect here. They prefer looking for herbs or studying mineralogy to empty theorizing. This can be quite wholesome and good, but it can also be greatly overdone.' His study of natural history could only estrange Goethe still further from politics. He understood history only as natural history, and comprehended it only insofar as it could be thought of in terms of man's biological nature. This is why the educational theory he later developed in Wilhelm Mosster's Wanderings represented the most advanced position he was able to adopt in the realm of the historical. His scientific bent went against the grain of politics, but it must be added that it was hostile to theology in equal measure. In this respect it represents the most positive fruit of Goethe's anti-clerical Spinozism. It explains why he took offence at the pietistic writings of Jacobi, his former friend, because the latter had argued that nature conceals God, whereas for Goethe the crucial aspect of Spinoza's thought lay in his assertion that both nature and spirit are a visible aspect of the divine. This is what Goethe means when he writes to Jacobi, saying 'God has punished you with metaphysics . . .; whereas He has blessed me with physics'.

Goethe's master concept in describing the revelations of the physical world is the 'primal phenomenon' (Urphenomen). It developed originally out of his botanical and anatomical studies. In 1784 Goethe discovered that the bones of the skull were the morphological development of changes in the bones of the spine; a year later he discovered the 'metamorphosis of plants'. What he meant by this was the idea that all the organs of plants, from the roots to the stamen, are nothing but leaves in a modified form. This led him to the concept of the 'primal plant' (Urpflance) which Schiller, in his celebrated first conversation with him, declared to be an 'idea', whereas Goethe insisted on endowing it with a certain sensuous reality. The place occupied in Goethe's writings by his scientific studies is the one which in lesser artists is commonly reserved for aesthetics. This aspect of Goethe's work can only be appreciated when it is realized that unlike almost all other intellectuals in this period, he never really made his peace with the idea of art as 'beautiful appearance' (der Schöne Schein).3

³ German classical aesthetics, as summed up by Hegel, defined Beauty as 'the sensuous manifestation of the Idea' But it was above all Schiller who developed the concept into a heuristic principle which would enable art to function as a revolutionary force, supplanting political action.

What reconciled poetry and politics in his eyes was not aesthetics, but the study of nature. And precisely because of this it is vital to note even in his scientific writings how obstinately Goethe opposed certain innovations in the realm of technology just as much as in politics. On the very threshold of the scientific age which was destined to extend the range and precision of our sense-perceptions in such a radical and unprecedented way, he reverted once more to old forms of scientific explanation and could therefore write: 'Man himself, when he makes use of his own sound senses is the greatest and most precise physical apparatus that can exist, and the great catastrophe of modern physics is that in it the experiments have, as it were, been separated off from man and aim . . . to know Nature simply by virtue of what artificial instruments can reveal.' According to his way of thinking the immediate natural purpose of science is to bring man in his thought and actions into harmony with himself. Changing the world by means of technology was not really his concern, even though as an old man he was astonishingly clear about its immeasurable implications for the future. The greatest benefit of scientific knowledge was determined for him by the form it gives to one's life. This conviction was something he developed into a strict pragmatic maxim: 'Only what is fruitful is true.'

Goethe belongs to the family of great minds for whom there is basically no such thing as an art separated from life. In his eyes the theory of the 'primal phenomenon' in science was also a theory of art, just as scholastic philosophy had been for Dante and the technical arts for Durer. Strictly speaking his only genuine scientific discoveries were in the field of botany. His research in anatomy was also important and has received recognition: this was his work on the intermexillary bone which admittedly was no original discovery.4 The Meteorology received little attention, and the Theory of Colours, which for Goethe represented the crowning point of his entire scientific work, and indeed, according to a number of statements, of his whole life, became the subject of fierce dispute. In recent times the controversy surrounding this, the most comprehensive of Goethe's scientific writings, has flared up once more. The Theory of Colours takes up a position diametrically opposed to Newton's optics. The basic disagreement underlying Goethe's often exasperated polemic, prolonged over many years, is this: whereas Newton explained white light as the composite of the different colours, Goethe declared it to be the simplest, most indivisible and homogeneous phenomenon known to us. It is not a compound ... least of all, a compound of coloured lights.' The Theory of Colours regards the colours as metamorphoses of light, as phenomena which are formed in the course of the struggle between light and darkness. Together with the idea of metamorphosis, the concept of polarity, which runs like a thread through Goethe's entire scientific enterprise, is of decisive importance here. Darkness is not merely the absence of light—for then it would not be discernible—but a positive counter-light. In his old age we even find him

⁴ The intermaxillary bone, i.e. a bone between the upper and lower jaws, played a role in the pre-Darwinian evolutionary debate about whether human beings were, as theologians insisted, anatomically different from the primates. Goethe, almost simultaneously with the French anatomist Vicq-d'Axyr, of whose work he was ignorant, showed independently that this bone, which is developed in animals, also survives vestigially in man who could not therefore be thought of as generically unique.

entertaining the idea that perhaps plants and animals evolved from their primal condition through the agency of light or darkness.

A peculiar feature of his scientific studies is that in them Goethe comes as close to the spirit of the Romantic School as he remains remote from it in his aesthetics. It is much harder to explain Goethe's philosophical position in terms of his poetic writings than of his scientific ones. Ever since that youthful moment of illumination which is recorded in the celebrated fragment on Nature, Spinoza remained the guiding light in his morphological studies. It was these that subsequently provided the basis for his relationship with Kant. While he could not find any point of contact with the main critical ocuvre—the Critique of Pure Reason and the Critique of Practical Reason (i.e. ethics)—he held the Critique of Judgment in the greatest possible esteem. For in that work Kant repudiates the teleological explanation of nature which had been one of the chief supports of enlightened philosophy and of deism. Goethe had to agree with him on this point, particularly since his own anatomical and botanical researches represented very advanced positions in the campaign of bourgeois science against the teleological outlook. Kant's definition of the organic as a purposiveness whose purpose lay inside and not outside the purposive being, was in harmony with Goethe's own concepts. The unity of the beautiful, natural beauty included, is always independent of purpose—in this Goethe and Kant are of one mind.

The Connoisseur of Enlightenment

The more Goethe became affected by developments in Europe, the more vigorous were his efforts to achieve security in his private life. It is in this context that we have to consider the fact that very shortly after his return from Italy he ended the relationship with Charlotte von Stein. Goethe's association with Christiane Vulpius, whom he met soon after he came back from Italy and who later became his wife, continued to outrage the citizens of the town for 15 years. Nevertheless, it would be an error to think of this relationship with a proletarian girl, who worked in a flower nursery, as evidence of Goethe's emancipated views. Even in such matters of private life Goethe held no fixed principles, let alone revolutionary ones. At the start Christiane was no more than his mistress, The remarkable feature of the relationship was not its beginnings but its later development. Even though Goethe was never able, and perhaps never even tried, to bridge the enormous cultural gap between himself and Christiane, even though Christiane's lowly birth inevitably gave offence to the petty-bourgeois society of Weimar and her way of life proved unacceptable to more liberal-minded and intelligent people, and even though neither partner regarded marital fidelity as sacrosanct—all this notwithstanding, Goethe dignified this union and with it Christiane by his unswerving loyalty and by a wholly admirable perseverance in an extremely delicate situation. And with a church wedding in 1807, fifteen years after their first meeting, he forced both court and society to accept the mother of his son. As for Frau von Stein, a lukewarm reconciliation was only achieved very much later, after years of profound antipathy.

In 1790, as Minister of State, Goethe took over the responsibility for culture and education, and a year later he was put in charge of the Court

Theatre. His activities in this sphere are simply immeasurable. They grew in scope from one year to the next. All scientific institutes, all the museums, the University of Jens, the technical schools, the voice-training academies, the academy of art, all these were placed under the poet's immediate direction, and he frequently concerned himself with the minutest matters of detail. Hand in hand with this went his efforts to expand his own household into an institute of European culture. His activities as a collector extended to every area of study and interest. These collections have formed the basis of the Goethe National Museum in Weimar with its picture gallery, its galleries of drawings, porcelain, coins, stuffed animals, bones and plants, minerals, fossils, chemical and physical apparatus, to say nothing of the collections of books and autographs. His universality knew no bounds. In areas in which he could not achieve anything as an artist, he wished at least to be a connoisseur. At the same time these collections provided a framework for a life which increasingly was enacted publicly on a European stage. They also endowed him with the authority which he required in his role as the greatest organizer of princely patronage that Germany had ever known. Voltaire was the first man of letters to secure a reputation on a European scale and to make use of intellectual and material resources of equal magnitude to defend the prestige of the bourgeoisie vis-à-vis the aristocracy. In this respect Goethe is Voltaire's immediate successor. And as with Voltaire, Goethe's position must be thought of in political terms. Hence despite his rejection of the French Revolution it remains true that he more than anyone else made purposeful and ingenious use of the increase in power which that revolution brought to the man of letters. Whereas Voltaire acquired wealth on a princely scale in the second half of his life, Goethe never achieved a comparable financial status. But in order to understand his remarkable obstinacy in business matters, notably in his dealings with the publishing house of Cotta, we must bear in mind that from the turn of the century onwards he looked upon himself as the founder of a national heritage.

III. The Collaboration with Schiller

Throughout this decade it was Schiller who time and again recalled Goethe from the distractions of his political activities and his immersion in the observation of nature and brought him back to literary production. The first meeting between the two poets took place soon after Goethe's return from Italy and was not a success. This was very much in tune with the opinion each held of the other. Schiller, who had made his name with such plays as The Robbers, Love and Intrigue, Fissko and Don Carlos had committed himself to class-conscious statements of a directness that stood in the sharpest possible contrast to Goethe's efforts at moderate mediation. Whereas Schiller wanted to take up the class struggle all along the line, Goethe had long since retreated to that fortified position from which only a cultural offensive could be launched and any political activity on the part of the bourgeoisie had of necessity to be defensive.

The fact that these two men could reach a compromise is symptomatic of the unstable character of the class consciousness of the German bourgeoisie. This compromise was brought about under the aegis of Kantian philosophy. In the interests of aesthetics Schiller, in his letters on

The Assthetic Education of Man, had stripped the radical formulations of Kantian ethics of their subversive bite and converted them into an instrument of historical construction. This paved the way for a rapprochement, or better an armistice, with Goethe. In reality the association between the two men was always marked by the diplomatic reserve which was the price of this compromise. The discussions between them were almost anxiously confined to formal problems of writing. Admittedly, on this plane they were epoch-making. Their correspondence is no doubt a balanced document, carefully edited down to the last detail and for ideological reasons it has always enjoyed a greater prestige than the deeper, freer and livelier correspondence which Goethe conducted with Zelter in his old age. The Young-German critic Gutzkow has rightly drawn attention to the hairsplitting discussions about aesthetic trends and artistic theories' which go round and round in circles throughout the correspondence. And he was also right to lay the blame for this at the door of the hostility, indeed the utter incompatibility of art and history which we encounter here. And even when it came to their greatest works, the poets could not always rely on each other for a sympathetic reception. 'He was', Goethe says of Schiller in 1829, 'like all people who base themselves too much on an idea. He too had no peace of mind and could never be finished with a thing. . . . I had my work cut out to hold my own and protect his work and mine and keep them safe from such influences." NO SHIP

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Schiller's influence was important in the first instance for Goethe's balleds (The Treasure Hunter, The Sorcerer's Apprentice, The Bride of Corinth, The God and the Bajadere). The official manifesto of their literary alliance, however, was the Xenien. The almanach containing these saturical epigrams appeared in 1795. Its thrust was directed at the enemies of Schiller's Die Horen, 5 namely the vulgar rationalism centred on Nicolai's circle in Berlin. The onslaught was effective. The literary success was heightened by a personal interest: both poets had put their names to the whole collection without revealing the authorship of the individual couplets. But all the verve and elegance of their campaign cannot conceal an underlying note of desperation. The era of Goethe's popular acclaim was over; and even if his authority grew from one decade to the next, he never again achieved true popularity. The later Goethe in particular displays that resolute contempt for the reading public which is characteristic of all the classical writers with the exception of Wieland and which receives its strongest expression at certain points in the Goethe-Schiller correspondence. Goethe had no relationship with his public. If he had a powerful impact, it remains true that he never lived or continued to live in that realm in which he created those first works which set the world alight.' He remained unaware of the extent to which he was himself a kind of gift to Germany. And least of all was he able to commit himself to any trend or tendency of the age. His attempt to represent his alliance with Schiller 2s such 2 trend proved illusory in the last analysis. The destruction of this illusion was a legitimate need and one which led the German public in the nineteenth century again and again to contrast Goethe and Schiller and measure each against the other. The influence of Weimar on the great mass of Germans was not that of the two poets, but

⁵ A literary periodical that appeared from 1795 to 1798 but proved a failure.

instead of the periodicals of Bertuch and Wieland, the Allgameins Literarische Zeitung and the Textscher Merker. 'We do not desire the upheavals', Goethe had written in 1795, 'which could pave the way for classical works in Germany.' The upheaval in question—that would have been the emancipation of the bourgeoisie which came too late to give birth to any classical works. Germanness, the genius of the German language—those were undoubtedly the strings on which Goethe played his great melodies; but the sounding-board of this instrument was not Germany, but the Europe of Napoleon.

A Citizen of Europe

Goethe and Napoleon shared a similar vision: the social emancipation of the bourgeoisie within the framework of political despotism. This was the 'impossible', the 'incommensurable' and the 'inadequate' that was the deepest source of their unrest. It brought Napoleon down. Of Goethe, however, it can be said that the older he became, the more his life assumed the shape of this political idea, consciously acquiring the form of the incommensurable and the inadequate, and turning itself into a miniature model of that political idea. If we could draw clear demarcation lines, then we could think of poetry as providing a metaphor for the bourgeois freedom of this micro-state, whereas in its private affairs the regime corresponds perfectly to the rule of despotism. But in reality of course it is equally essential to pursue the interweaving of these irreconcilable aspirations in both life and poetry: in life, as a freedom of erotic experience and as the strictest regime of 'renunciation', in poetry, nowhere more than in the second part of Faust whose political dialectics provide the key to Goethe's position. Only in this context is it possible to understand how Goethe could spend his last thirty years subordinating his life to the bureaucratic categories of compromise, mediation and procrastination. It is senseless to judge his actions and his stands in terms of any abstract standard of morality. It is such abstraction that is responsible for the touch of absurdity we can see in the attacks Borne launched against Goethe in the name of Young Germany. It is precisely when we come to examine his maxims and the most remarkable aspects of his conduct that we find that Goethe only becomes comprehensible in the context of the political position which he created and in which he installed himself. The subterranean but all the more profound kinship with Napoleon is so decisive that the post-Napoleonic age, the power that toppled Napoleon, is no longer capable of understanding it. The son of bourgeois parents rises in the world, outstrips everyone, becomes the heir to a revolution whose power in his hands is such that it makes everyone tremble (French Revolution; Sturm and Drang); and at the very moment when he had dealt the most grievous blow to the power of superannuated forces, he established his own dominion within the self-same archaic, feudal framework (Empire; Weimar).

In the political constellation that governed his life, the animosity Goethe felt for the Wars of Liberation, an animosity highly offensive to bourgeois literary historians, becomes entirely comprehensible. In his eyes Napoleon had been the founder of a European public even before he had established a European Empire. In 1815 Goethe let himself be persuaded by Iffland for the last time to write a play, The Awakening of

Epimenides, in celebration of the entry of the victorious troops into Berlin. But he could only bring himself to renounce Napoleon by simultaneously refusing to relinquish the chaotic and dark manifestations of the same elemental power which Napoleon embodied and which had once shaken the world. He could muster no sympathy for the victors. And on the other hand, we find the same kind of idiosyncrasy in the pained determination with which he fends off the patriotic spirit which moved Germany in 1813, something we also see in the way he could not bear to remain in the same room with sick people or in the vicinity of the dying. His dislike of everything military is not so much a rejection of army discipline, or even drill, as a horror of everything which is calculated to detract from the appearance of the human being, from the uniform to the wound. In 1792 his nerves were subjected to a severe test when he had to accompany the Duke in the invasion of France by the allied armies. On this occasion Goethe was forced to display all his art in concentrating on the observation of nature, optical studies and sketching, in order to insulate himself from the events he was witnessing. The Campaign in France is just as vital for an understanding of the poet as it is a melancholy and vague response to the problems of world politics.

The change of direction towards Europe and towards politics—that is the mark of the final stage of Goethe's poetic work. But it was only after the death of Schiller that he could feel this the firmest of all ground beneath his feet. In contrast, the great prose work which was taken up again after a long pause and completed under Schiller's influence, Wilbelm Meister's Apprenticeship, shows Goethe still tarrying in the antechambers of idealism, in that German humanism from which he later emerged after much struggle to enter into an ecumenical humanism. The ideal of the Appenticeship—education—and the social milieu of the hero—the world of actors—are indeed strictly related to each other, since they are both the exponents of that specifically German realm of 'beautiful appearance' that seemed so empty of meaning to the bourgeoisie of the West which was just in the process of entering on its period of hegemony. In fact it was almost a poetic necessity to place actors in the centre of a bourgeois German novel. It enabled Goethe to avoid a confrontation with the contingencies of politics, only to take them up again with a correspondingly greater vigour twenty years later in the sequel to the novel. The fact that in Wilbelm Muster Goethe's hero was a semi-artist was what guaranteed the novel's decisive influence, precisely because it was a product of the German situation at the end of the century. It led to the series of artist-novels of Romanticism, from the Heinrich von Ofterdingen of Novalis and Tieck's Sternbald down to Monke's Maler Nolten. The book's style is in harmony with its content. 'There is no sign anywhere of logical machinery or a dialectical struggle between ideas and subject matter; instead, Goethe's prose offers a theatrical perspective, it is a thought-out piece that has been learnt by heart, a work in which gentle prompting has led to a creative structure of thought. In it the things do not speak themselves, but as it were seek the poet's permission to speak. This is why its language is lucid and yet modest, clear but without obtruding itself, diplomatic in the extreme.'

It lay in the nature of both men that Schiller's influence functioned essentially as a formative stimulus on Goethe's production, without

basically modifying its direction. The fact that Goethe turned towards the ballad and resumed work on Wilbelm Meister and the Faust fragment, may perhaps be put down to Schiller's influence. But the actual exchange of ideas about these works almost always confined itself to questions of craft and technique. Goethe's inspiration remained undiverted. His friendship was with Schiller the man and the author. But it was not the friendship of two poets which has often been claimed for it. The extraordinary charm and force of Schiller's personality nevertheless revealed themselves to Goethe in their full magnitude, and after Schiller's death Goethe left a memorial to them in the poem Epilogm to Schiller's 'Bell'.

IV. Goethe's Apogee

After Schiller's death Goethe reorganized his personal relationships. Henceforth he would not have anyone in his immediate circle whose stature was even remotely comparable to his own. And there was hardly anyone in Weimar who could be said to have been taken into his confidence in any special way. On the other hand, in the course of the new century the friendship with Zelter, the founder of the Berlin voicetraining academy, grew in importance for Goethe. In time Zelter came to assume the rank of a sort of ambassador for Goethe, representing him in the Prussian capital. In Weimar itself Goethe gradually established for himself an entire staff of assistants and secretaries without whose help the vast inheritance that he prepared for the press could never have been organized. In an almost mandarin manner the poet ended up by putting the last thirty years of his life in the service of the production of the written word. It is in this sense that we have to regard his great literary press office with its many assistants from Eckermann, Riemer, Soret and Müller down to clerks like Krauter and Kohn. Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe are the main source for these last decades and they are moreover one of the finest prose works of the nineteenth century. What fascinated Goethe about Eckermann, perhaps more than anything else, was the latter's unrestrained attachment to the positive, a quality never found in superior minds but also one which is rare even in lesser men. Goethe never had any real relationship with criticism in the narrower sense. The strategy of the art business which did fascinate him from time to time always expressed itself in dictatorial ways; in the manifestoes he drafted with Schiller and Herder or in the regulations he drew up for actors and artists.

More independent than Eckermann, and for that very reason, of course, less exclusively useful to the poet, was Chancellor von Müller. But his Conversations with Goeths are likewise one of the documents that have helped to shape the image of Goethe as it has come down to posterity. These two should be joined by Friedrich Riemer, the Professor of Classical Philology, not because of his gifts as a conversationalist, but by virtue of his great and perceptive analysis of Goethe's character. The first great document to emerge from this literary organism which the ageing Goethe created for himself, was the autobiography. Postry and Truth is a preview of Goethe's last years in the form of a memoir. This retrospective account of his active youth provides access to one of the most crucial principles of his life. Goethe's moral activity is in the last analysis a positive counterpole to the Christian principle of remorse: 'Seek to give a coherent meaning to everything in your life.' 'The happiest man is one

who can establish a connection between the beginning of his life and the end.' In such statements we see an expression of the desire to give shape to and make manifest the image of the world he had accommodated himself to in his youth: the world of the inadequate, the compromised, the contingent; of erotic indecision and political vacillation. It is only against this background that we can see the Goethean credo of 'renunciation' in its right sense, in all its terrible ambiguity: Goethe renounced not just pleasure, but also greatness and heroism. This is perhaps why his autobiography breaks off before its hero has achieved a position in society. The reminiscences of later years are scattered through the Italian Journey, the Campaign in France, and the Diaries (Tag- und Jabresbefte). In his description of the years 1750-1775 Goethe has included a series of vignettes of the most important contemporaries of his youth, while Gunther, Lenz, Merck and Herder have partly entered literary history in the same formulas that Goethe devised for them. In portraying them Goethe depicted himself at the same time, and shows himself adopting a hostile or sympathetic stance towards the friends or competitors with whom he had to deal. We see here the same compulsion at work that inspired him as a dramatist to confront William of Orange with Egmont, the courtier with the man of the people, or Tasso with Antonio, the poet with the courtier, Prometheus with Epimetheus, the creative man with the elegaic dreamer, and Faust with Mephisto, as the ensemble of personas at work in his own personality.

Beyond this more immediate group of assistants, a further circle grew up in these later years. There was the Swiss, Heinrich Meyer, Goethe's expert on questions of art, strictly classicistic in outlook, a reflective man who helped Goethe with the editing of the Propylain and with the later periodical Kunst and Altertum (Art and Antiquity). There was Friedrich August Wolf, the classical philologist, whose demonstration that the Homeric epics were the product of a whole series of unknown poets which were harmonized by a later editor and only then became known as the works of Homer, evoked very mixed feelings in Goethe. Wolf together with Schiller was drawn into Goethe's attempt to write the Achilles as a sequel to the Homeric epics, a work that remained a fragment. We should also mention Sulpiz Bosserée, the discoverer of the German Middle Ages in painting, the inspiring advocate of German Gothic, and as such a friend of the Romantics who chose him to act as spokesman for their views on art. (His labours in this direction, which were spread over many years, had to rest content with a half-victory: Goethe finally allowed himself to be persuaded to submit a collection of document and plans concerning the history and completion of Cologne Cathedral to the court.) All these relationships, and countless others, are the expression of a universality in the interests of which Goethe consciously blurred the dividing lines between the artist, the researcher and the amateur. No poetic genre or language acquired popularity in Germany without Goethe at once turning his attention to it. Everything he achieved as translator, writer of travel-books, as a biographer, connoisseur, critic, physicist, educationalist and even theologian, as theatrical producer, court poet, companion and minister-all this served to enhance his reputation for universality. However, it was a European, as opposed to a German arena, which increasingly became the focus of these interests. He felt a passionate admiration for the great European

minds who emerged towards the end of his life, for Byron, Walter Scott and Manzoni. In Germany, on the other hand, he would often give advancement to mediocrities and he failed to appreciate the genius of such contemporaries as Hölderlin, Kleist and Jean Paul.

Elective Affinities and Feudal Restorations

In 1809, at the same time as Poetry and Truth, Goethe also wrote The Elective Affinities. His work on this novel coincided with his first real experience of the European nobility, an experience which gave him an insight into that new, self-assured worldly public to whom, twenty years previously in Rome, he had resolved to address his writings. The Elective Affinities is in fact directed at a public consisting of the Silesian-Polish aristocracy, lords, émigrés and Prussian generals who congregated in the Bohemian spas around the Empress of Austria. Not that this prevents the poet from giving a critical view of their mode of life. For The Elective Affinities provides a sketchy, but very incisive picture of the decline of the family in the ruling class of the period. But the power which destroys this already disintegrating institution is not the bourgeoisie, but a feudal society which, in the shape of the magic forces of fate, finds itself restored to its pristine state. Fifteen years previously, in his drama of the revolution, The Agitated (Die Ansgeregten), Goethe had made the schoolmaster say of the nobility, For all their superciliousness, these people cannot rid themselves of the mysterious feeling of awe that permeates all the living forces of nature; they cannot bring themselves to deny the eternal bond that unites words and effects, actions and their consequences.' And these words provide the magical patriarchal groundmotif of this novel. It is a mode of thought we find repeated in Wilbelm Meister's Wanderings in which even the most resolute attempts to construct the image of a fully developed bourgeoisie lead him back inexorably to the pastiche of mystical, medieval organizations—the secret society of the Tower. Goethe understood the emergence of bourgeois culture more fully than any of his predecessors or successors but he was nonetheless unable to conceive of it otherwise than from within the framework of an idealized feudal state. And when he found himself even further estranged from Germany by the mismanagement of the German Restoration which coincided with the lasty twenty years of his working life, he even emphasized this idealized feudalism still further by amalgamating it with the patriarchal features of the East. We witness the emergence of the oriental Middle Ages in the West-östlicher Divan (West-Eastern Collection).

This book not only created a novel type of philosophical poetry; it was also the greatest expression of the love poetry of old age to be found in German and European literature. It was more than political necessity, that led Goethe to the Orient. The powerful late blossoming of Goethe's erotic passion in his old age made him regard old age itself as a rebirth, as a sort of fancy-dress which merged in his mind with the world of the Orient and which transformed his encounter with Marianne von Willemer into a brief intoxicating festival. The West-östlicher Disen is the epode of this love. Goethe could only understand the past, history, to the extent to which he could integrate it into his life. In the succession of passionate relationships, Frau von Stein represented for him the

reincernation of Antiquity, Marianna von Willemer the Orient and Ulrike von Levetzow, his last love, the symbiosis of these with the fairy-tale images of his youth. This is the message of his last love poem, the Marienbad Elegy. Goethe underlined the didactic strain in the West-östlicher Direct in the notes he appended to the volume in which, basing himself on Hammer-Purgstall and Diez, he presented the fruits of his oriental studies to the public. Amid the expanses of the Middle Ages in the East, amid princes and viziers, in the presence of the splendour of the Imperial Court, Goethe assumes the mask of Hatem, a vagabond and drinker, a man without needs, and thereby commits himself in his poetry to that hidden aspect of his nature which he once confided to Eckermann: 'Magnificent buildings and rooms are all right for princes and wealthy men. When you live in them, you feel at your ease . . . and want nothing more. This is wholly at odds with my nature. When I live in a splendid house, like the one I had in Karlsbad, I at once become lazy and inactive. A lowlier dwelling, on the other hand, like the wretched room we are in now, a little untidy, a little gipsy-like—that is the right thing for me; it leaves my inner being with the complete freedom to do what it wishes and to create from within myself.' In the figure of Hatem, Goethe, who had by then become reconciled to the experience of his adult years, allows free rein to the unstable and untamed elements of his youth. In many of these poems he was able to use all his genius to give the wisdom of beggars, publicans and tramps the finest poetic expression they have ever received.

In Wilbelm Meister's Wanderings the didactic quality of the later writings is at its most deliberate. The novel which long lay fallow was then completed in a great hurry. Teeming with contradictions and inconsistencies, it was finally treated by the poet as a storehouse in which he got Eckermann to record the contents of his notebooks. The numerous stories and episodes which form the basis of the work are only loosely connected. The most important of them concern the 'Pedagogical Province', a very remarkable hybrid in which we can see Goethe coming to grips with the great socialist writings of Sismondi, Fourier, Saint-Simon, Owen and Bentham. It is unlikely that his knowledge of them derived from his own reading; their influence among his contemporaries was powerful enough to induce Goethe to try and combine feudal tendencies with those of the bourgeois praxis which are so prominent in these writings.

This synthesis is achieved at the expense of the classical ideal of education, which retreats here all along the line. Very typical is the fact that farming is held to be obligatory whereas instruction in the dead languages goes unmentioned. The 'humanists' of Wilbelm Moister's Approxiteship have all turned into artisans: Wilhelm is a surgeon, Jamo a mining engineer, Philine a sempstress. Goethe took over the idea of vocational education from Pestalozzi. Earlier on he had sung the praises of handicraft in Worther's Latters from Switzerland and he now does so again here. Since at this time economists were already beginning to confront the problems of industry, we may regard this as a rather reactionary stance. But that aside, the socio-economic ideas which Goethe supports here fit well enough into an extreme utopian version of the ideology of bourgeois philanthropy. 'Property public and private' is the slogan proclaimed by one of the

inscriptions on the Uncle's model estates. And another motto ran: 'From the useful via the true to the beautiful.' The same syncretism is to be found, typically, in religious instruction. While on the one hand Goethe is the sworn enemy of Christianity, on the other, he respects religion as the strongest guarantee of any hierarchic form of society. He even goes so far as to reconcile himself to the image of the sufferings of Christ, something which had provoked a violent antipathy in him for decades. The social order in the Goethean sense, i.e. an order governed by patriarchal and cosmic norms, finds its purest expression in the figure of Makarie. The experience he gained of practical, political activity failed to modify his basic attitudes, even though it frequently contradicted them. In consequence his attempt to reconcile his experience and his convictions in a work of art was inevitably doomed to remain as fissured as the structure of this novel. And we even see ultimate reservations in Goethe himself when he looks to America to provide his characters with a happier, more harmonious future. That is where they emigrate to at the end of his novel. It has been described as an 'organized, communist escape'.

The Faustian Longing

If it was the case that in the years of his maturity Goethe frequently avoided literature to follow his whims or inclinations more freely in theoretical work or administrative duties, the major phenomenon of his later years can be said to lie in the fact that the boundless circle of his continuing study of natural philosophy, mythology, literature, art and philology, his former involvement in mining, finance, the theatre, freemasonry and diplomacy, was now all drawn together concentrically into a final, monumental work of literature: the second part of Fanst. By his own admission Goethe spent over sixty years working on both parts of Faust. 6 In 1773 he brought the first fragment, the Urfaust, with him to Weimar. It already contained some of the principal features of the later work. There was the figure of Gretchen, who was the naïve counterpart to Faust, the prototypical reflective man, but she was also the proletarian girl, the illegitimate mother, the child-murderer who is executed and whose fate had long fuelled the fierce social criticism in the poems and plays of the Stärmer and Dranger. There was the figure of Mephistopheles, who even then was less the devil of Christian teaching than the Earth Spirit from the traditions of magic and the Cabbala. And finally Faust himself, who was already the titan and superman, the twin brother of Moses about whom Goethe had also planned to write and who likewise was to attempt to wrest the secret of creation from God/Nature. In 1790 Faust, A Fragment appeared. In 1808 for the first edition of his works Goethe sent the completed Part I to Cotta, his publisher. Here, for the first time, we find the action clearly defined. It is based on the 'Prologue in Heaven' where God and Mephisto make a wager for the soul of Faust. When the devil comes and offers his services, however, Faust makes a

⁶ To clarify matters for the English reader, the publication history of Faut is as follows: The Urfaut, completed by 1775, did not appear at the time, but was lost and did not come to light again until 1887. The first portion to appear was the so-called Faut, A Fragment, in 1790. This contained parts of Faut I. The latter was published complete in 1808 as Benjamin states. Goethe finished work on Faut II in 1831, but refused to allow publication during his lifetime. The work appeared shortly after his death in 1832.

pact with him to the effect that he will only forfeit his soul if he says to the moment:

Ah linger on, thou art so fair!
Then may your fetters on me lay
I'll gladly perish then and there.
Then may the death-bell toll, recalling
That from your service you are free;
The clock may stop, the pointer falling
And time itself be past for mel

But the crux of the work is this: Faust's fierce and restless striving for the absolute makes a mockery of Mephisto's attempts at seduction, the limits of sensual pleasure are soon reached, but are insuffient to cost Faust his soul: 'Thus from desire I reel on to enjoyment/And in enjoyment languish for desire.'

With the passage of time Faust's longing grows and grows, surpassing all bounds. The first part of the play ends in Gretchen's dungeon amidst cries of woe. Taken on its own, this is one of Goethe's darkest works. And it has been said that both in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries the Faust legend was the tragedy of the bourgeoisie, whose cause was defeated on each occasion. The first part concludes Faust's existence as a bourgeois. The political setting of Part II consists of imperial courts and classical palaces. The outlines of Goethe's own Germany which are still discernible through the veil of the Romantic Middle Ages in Part I have disappeared entirely in Part II. Instead the whole vast movement of thought is ultimately imaged in terms of the German Baroque and it is through the eyes of the Baroque that Goethe views antiquity. Having laboured his whole life long to imagine classical antiquity ahistorically and, as it were, suspended freely in space; now, in the classical-romantic phantasmagoria of the Helen scenes he constructs the first great image of antiquity as seen through the prism of the German past. Around this work, which was to become Act III of Faust II, the rest of the poem is assembled. It can hardly be over-emphasized how much these later parts, above all the scenes at the Imperial Court and in the military camp, constitute a political apology and represent a political summing-up of Goethe's former activities at court. If his period of duty as a minister had ended in a mood of profound resignation and with his capitulation to the intrigues of a mistress of the Prince, he nevertheless creates at the end of his life, in the setting of an ideal Baroque Germany, a screen on which he projects a magnified image of the world of the statesman in all its ramifications and at the same time shows all its defects intensified to the point of grotesqueness. Mercantilism, antiquity and mystical scientific experiments: the perfection of the state through money, of art through antiquity, of nature through experiment. These provide the signature of the epoch of German Baroque which Goethe here invokes. And it is ultimately not a dubious aesthetic expedient but the innermost political necessity of the poem when, at the close of Act V, the heaven of Catholicism is unveiled to disclose Gretchen as one of the penitent. Goethe saw too deeply to allow his political regression towards

⁷ Translated by G. M. Priest, New York 1932.

absolutism to rest content with the Protestant courts of the eighteenth century. Soret has made the penetrating observation that 'Goethe is liberal in an abstract sense, but in practice he inclines towards the most reactionary principles.' In the crowning stage of Faust's life Goethe gives expression to the spirit of his practice: the reclaiming of land from the sea, an activity which nature prescribes to history and in which nature is itself inscribed—that was Goethe's conception of historical action and any political formation was only justified in his eyes if it could protect and guarantee such action. In the mysterious, utopian interplay between agrarian and technological activity on the one hand with the political apparatus of absolutism on the other, Goethe glimpsed the magic formula which would dissolve the realities of social conflict into nothingness. Bourgeois agricultural methods operating under the dominion of feudal tenure—that was the discordant image in which Faust's greatest moment of fulfilment was to be crystallized.

The Bourgeoisie Reject Goethe

Shortly after bringing the work to completion, Goethe died on 22 March 1832. By that time industrialization in Europe was proceeding at a furious pace. Goethe foresaw future developments. In a letter to Zelter in 1825, for example, he says: Wealth and speed are what the world admires and strives for. Railways, express mail, steamships and all possible facilities for communication are what the cultivated world desires in order to over-cultivate itself and thereby to stick fast in mediocrity. The concept of the general public has also led to the spread of a medium-level culture: this is the goal of the Bible Societies, the Lancastrian method and God knows what else. The fact is that this is the century for able minds, for quick-thinking, practical men with a certain dextenty which enables them to feel superior to the crowd, even though their gifts do not put them in the first rank. Let us try and remain true to the principles with which we came; along with perhaps a few others we shall be the last members of an era which may not return so quickly.' Goethe knew that in the short run his work would make little impact, and in fact the bourgeoisie in whom the hopes of a German democracy were burgeoning once more, preferred to look up to Schiller as their model. From the circle of the Young German writers came the first weighty literary protests. Borne, for example, wrote as follows: 'Goethe always paid homage only to egoism and coldness; hence it is only the cold who like him. He has taught educated people how to be educated, broadminded and unprejudiced, while remaining egoistic; how to possess every vice without becoming coarse, every foible without becoming ridiculous; how to keep a pure mind uncontaminated by the filth of the heart, how to sin with decorum and to make use of artistic form to beautify anything reprehensible or base. And because he taught all this he is revered by educated people.' Goethe's centenary in 1849 passed unnoticed, whereas that of Schiller, ten years later, was made the occasion for a great demonstration by the German bourgeoisie.

Goethe did not come to the fore until the 1870s, after the establishment of the Empire, at a time when Germany was on the lookout for monumental representatives of national prestige. The chief milestones are as follows: the foundation of the Goethe Society under the aegis of German princes; the Weimar edition of his works, under princely patronage; the establishment of the imperialist image of Goethe in the German universities. But despite the never-ending flood of literature produced by Goethe scholars, the bourgeoisie has never been able to make more than a limited use of his genius, to say nothing of the question of how far they understood his intentions. His whole work abounds in reservations about them. And if he founded a great literature among them, he did so with face averted. Nor did he ever enjoy anything like the success that his genius merited; in fact he declined to do so. And this was so as to pursue his purpose of giving the ideas that inspired him the form which has enabled them to resist their dissolution at the hands of the bourgeoisie, a resistance made possible because they remained without effect and not because they could be deformed or trivialized. Goethe's intransigence towards the cast of mind of the average bourgeois and hence a new view of his work acquired a new relevance with the repudiation of Naturalism. The Neo-Romantics (Stefan George, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Rudolph Borchardt), the last bourgeois poets of any distinction to attempt to rescue bourgeois ideology, if only on the plane of culture and under the patronage of the enfeebled feudal authorities, provided a new important stimulus to Goethe scholarship (Konrad Burdach, Georg Simmel, Friedrich Gundolf). Their work was above all concerned with the exploration of the works and the style of Goethe's last phase, which nineteenth century scholars had ignored.

Translated by Rodney Livingstone

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A Persian Tale—Mr Rezai's Family

The family of Khalilullah Rezai occupies a special place in the tormented annals of Iran's revolution. During the reign of the Shah, Mr Rezai's children were actively involved in supporting the Mojahidin guerrillas and four of them—three sons and a daughter—were slain by government forces. He himself was imprisoned, and his wife and son-in-law tortured. When he first met Khomeini in Paris in 1978, the Avatollah welcomed him warmly and told him how jealous he was of a father who had produced four martyrs for the revolutionary cause. But the fall of the Shah has not brought an end to Mr Rezai's sufferings. He is now a victim of Khomeini's dictatorship as he was earlier of the Shah's. In 1981 he went into exile from his country while his wife and fourteen other family members went into hiding in Iran. The official television named his wife as a 'spreader of corruption upon earth', the current term of excommunication, and encouraged the population to report her whereabouts. His home and two shops, which sell central heating equipment, were expropriated and his employees were jailed. A nephew, Said Shahruqi was executed in the prison at Mahallat, on the Tehran-to-Isfahan road, for being a supporter of the Mojahidin. Four of Mr Rezai's nieces are also in

Mr Rezai recounts his tale with precision, dignity and some scorn for the tyrants, crowned and turbaned, against whom his family has long fought. The Mojahidin first met in his house when they were formed in 1965. His eldest son Ahmad was the group's treasurer and the man responsible for preparing forged documents and passes. Ahmad had been in one of the nationalist youth movements which remained loyal to the memory of Dr Mosadeq, the premier ousted in 1953, and he maintained his links with the bazaar merchants from whom the Mojahidin initially drew support. As his father proudly tells it, Ahmad was very disciplined, very cool and, in the Persian term, porker—full of work.

When the majority of the Mojahidin leadership were arrested by the Savak in September 1971, Ahmad managed to stay free and played an indispensable role in keeping the organization alive in its first of many trials by fire. In February 1972, however, he was caught in a police trap. Ahmad, age 26, died by blowing himself up together with four policemen who tried to seize him. He was the first of the Mojahidin to lose his life in the struggle against the Shah.

Mr Rezai's second son Reza was a member of the Mojahidin central committee: arrested in September 1971 he told his jailors that he would lead them to his brother Ahmad. He was able to escape by giving his police escort the slip in a public bathhouse where a rendezvous had supposedly been arranged. He remained free until June 1973 and sent reports on prison life to the Mojahidin network in Iraq who broadcast them over Baghdad radio. But after nearly two years at liberty he was caught in an ambush outside a contact's house and was shot by police while trying to hide behind a parked car. He was 24.

Mehdi, Mr Rezzi's third son, was one of the Mojahidin group responsible for assassinating military officials of the Shah's government and their American advisers. He was caught one day in 1972 outside the house of Mohammad Rezz Szadati, a Mojahidin leader who survived long imprisonment by the Shah only to be executed in jail in June 1981 as a reprisal for Mojahidin hostility to the new regime. Mehdi was carrying a bag containing weapons and when stopped by police he tried to run away: but he tripped and lost his bag, and his pistol then jammed. The Shah's secret police, SAVAK, first tortured him: they pulled out his nails, urinated into his mouth, and burnt the skin on his back—urging him all the while to shout 'Long Live the Shah'. Later he was put on open trial and his family were allowed to visit him.

But Mehdi's trial was broken off when the accused began to make political statements from the dock and he later received a second trial to which no reporters or relatives were allowed. This time the regime made no mistake: on 5 September 1972 the radio announced that Mehdi Rezai had been executed. Mr Rezai suspects his son died under torture, since the family were not allowed to see the body as it was buried in the cemetery of Behesht-i Zahra, on the southern outskirts of Tehran. Mehdi was 19 when he died.

In February 1974 it was the turn of the whole family to go to jail: in the night Mr Rezai, his wife, two of his daughters, a son-in-law, a three-year old grandson and another son, plus two house guests were taken to prison. Mr Rezai and his wife were put in solitary confinement and she was beaten whilst being hung from the ceiling by her wrists. But one daughter, Sedige, was away from home at the time and managed to evade capture. Her family had no contact with her until some months later, in January 1975, it was announced that Sedige Rezai had been killed in a gun battle with police in a Tehran street. She was 18 and had just finished her secondary schooling.

These tragedies did not lead to quiescence in the Rezai family. A second daughter, Nasrin, was jailed after taking literally a statement of the Shah's that those who did not like his regime could leave the country. Another son, Mohsen, was imprisoned for three years. Mr Rezai himself restarted his business after leaving prison and in 1977, along with a group of writers, lawyers and nationalist politicians, he was one of the founders of the Iranian Committee for Human Rights.

At first, the revolutionary authorities feted Mr Rezai: he met Khomeini on several occasions and warned him of the corruption associated with the clergy. 'The mollahs may make mistakes', Khomeini told him, 'but they are not thieves'. When Mr Rezai taxed the Ayatollah with promises of liberty he had made when in exile in Paris, the older man replied: 'It was suitable to say such things then. It is not suitable now'. By mid-1979 Mr Rezai had abandoned all hope in Khomeini, and the Mojahidin, who revere the memory of his four dead children as their martyrs, were in increasing opposition to Khomeini's Islamic Republic. Mr Rezai stresses what he sees as Khomeini's ignorance and stupidity and the price Iran has paid for this: the loss of tens of thousands of lives, the decay of the economy, the new dictatorship.

He still believes that the ideals for which his family has suffered so much can be realised and he draws his inspiration from two cultural roots. One is Islam: he quotes from a letter by Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, to the military commander Malek-i Ashtar, warning him against bloodshed. The other inspiration is the Persian lyrical poetry of the thirteen and fourteenth centuries, which so many Iranians of an older generation can quote lengthily by heart. Appealing for international support against Khomeini, he cites the poet Saadi: "All humans are members of the same family/Who have one origin in creation/If one limb of that body becomes painful/The others will become restless/If you do not care about the pain of other peoples/You do not deserve to be called human beings".

I met Mr Rezai in December 1981. A few weeks later, Radio Tehran announced that Revolutionary Guards had discovered the house in north Tehran where a group of Mojahidin leaders was staying and that, following two hours of fierce resistance by those inside, the house had been blown up and eleven Mojahidin members killed. Three of those who died were especially well known: Musa Khiabani, Mojahidin leader inside Iran, and the relative of Sheikh Mohammad Khiabani, organiser of a independent socialist movement in the northern city of Tabriz in 1920; Ashraf Rabii, the wife of exiled Mojahidin leader, Masud Rajavi; and Azar Rezai, Khiabani's wife and the fifth of Mr Rezai's children to die fighting dictatorship in Iran.

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ANTHONY BARNETT

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special number

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The Falklands War promises to be a watershed in British politics, giving a virulent new lease of life to Margaret Thatcher's authoritarian populism, adding a sharp twist to the eclipse of the Left and the division of the Labour movement, stoking up an atavistic imperialism and an all-too-modern militarism. We devote this entire issue of the Review to an essay on the causes and consequences of the war by Anthony Barnett. The New Left movement which founded this journal was born in the aftermath of Suez, as was the first Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. In the Falklands War our ruling class evidently hoped to reverse the verdict of Suez and to consolidate a far-reaching domestic realignment. Britain's defeat in 1956 was a moment in the assertion of the Third World against the old colonial powers; Britain's victory in 1982 has not been the product of any such fundamental shift in world politics, but it will nevertheless encourage further military expeditions and interventions by the First World and has already demonstrated the uses of war mobilization to governments facing political disaster. Anthony Barnett's careful reconstruction of the path to war identifies the strong element of political opportunism prompting Thatcher's action. But, as he shows, an adequate understanding of the decision to send the task force, and to recover the Islands manu militari, must set these steps to war against the background of a particular political culture, of a decaying social and economic fabric, and of the turbulent cross-currents which disturb the contemporary capitalist world.

Recently the term imperialism appeared to be once again falling out of favour in progressive and left-wing circles in the advanced capitalist countries. To some it seemed redolent of the outworn jargon of economistic Marxism; to others, a relic of the rhetoric of post-sixties radicalism with little relevance to the tasks of the contemporary peace movement. It took no account of changed world relationships nor of the primacy of new types of international conflict and confrontation. If nothing else, the Falklands War has given us an object lesson in the actuality of imperialism and of the popular psychology that accompanies it, albeit with the addition of lethal new ingredients. The context which gave meaning and efficacy to Margaret Thatcher's inspired political opportunism is that of contemporary imperialism as well as that of the British state form. In its early days the Communist International defined imperialism as the contradiction between the global organization of the

forces of production and the national organization of the state. This contradiction is no less acute in the modern world than it was in 1919, and technological developments have rendered it both more obsolescent and incalculably more lethal.

Imperialist wars have often been fought for a lofty principle and have by no means always pitted a capitalist power against a genuine national liberation movement. The United States helped to inaugurate the modern epoch of imperialism in 1898 with a war against Spain whose ostensible goal was the liberation of Cuba. In 1914 Britain declared war on Germany ostensibly in defence of Belgian neutrality and self-determination. Indeed socialists in each belligerent state in the First World War persuaded themselves that they should support their own country in the carnage because it was fighting a more reactionary capitalist state. The Falklands War was, of course, not on this scale, nor even on that of the Spanish-American War, but more a sort of 'Agadir incident' with bloodshed and missiles. In this war some British socialists disgracefully endorsed the task force on the grounds that Britain was fighting a fascist dictatorship; and many Argentinian socialists were unwise enough to support the actions of the Junta on the grounds that it was fighting imperialism. In reality, both task force and Junta were creatures of contemporary imperialism without which they could not have existed.

The right to communal self-government for the inhabitants of the Falkland Islands, and Argentina's right to sovereignty over the archipelago and its maritime resources, are both eminently justifiable. Neither the inhabitants of the Islands nor those of Buenos Aires should be subject to a terrorist military regime. Equally Argentina has as much right to the oil of the South Atlantic as Britain does to the oil of the North Sea-in both cases, the claims of humanity as a whole are the only ones which could take precedence. Yet however justifiable may have been some of the stated objectives of the belligerents, the decision to pursue them by means of war was not justifiable. Today there are over a hundred and fifty sovereign states in the world and there are hundreds of potential conflicts between them in which one or both sides could claim to be pursuing justifiable objectives—the principle of nationality itself invites such conflicting interpretations. Moreover the time is fast approaching when even the smaller states will be able to buy or make terrible weapons of mass slaughter. To sanction their wars is thus a sure recipe for global disaster; for that scenario of exterminism discussed in these pages by Edward Thompson, Raymond Williams, Lucio Magri and others. This is not a counsel of indiscriminate pacifism. Socialists can and must

support wars of liberation and revolutionary self-defence, and civil wars against dictatorship, oppression and exploitation; since wars of this kind help to remove the scourge of militarism itself.

In different ways Britain and Argentina both illustrate the increasing and lethal militarization of politics in the modern world. Until recently this militaristic drive has been chiefly inwards in Argentina and chiefly outwards in Britain, reflecting their structurally different positions in the imperialist world order. Though Argentina and Britain are at opposite ends of the Atlantic, and opposite sides of the economic faultline within the capitalist world, their social formations have been afflicted by the same international crisis and by similar policies of economic mismanagement. In both countries there is mass unemployment and chronic stagnation of the forces of production; both have been subjected to monetarism and the IMF; in both an insecure sense of national identity seeks consolation in grandiose projects; and in both the ruling class is haunted by the memory of proletarian revolt—the Cordobazo and the Saltley pickets. If the political and moral bankruptcy of Britain's ruling order has been made manifest in the Brixton and Toxteth riots, and in the H-Blocks of Northern Ireland; then the crimes of the Argentinian Junta have been dramatized to the world by the mothers of the 'disappeared ones' in the Plaza 25 de Mayo.

The murderous match between Britain and Argentina required essential elements of asymmetry as well. Despite the militarization of its government, Argentina has been amongst the most externally pacific of states: on 1 April this year it had not fought a war for over a hundred years. - Britain, by contrast, is the only state in the world whose armed forces have been almost continuously engaged in hostilities since the close of the Second World War: Greece, Malaya, Korea, Kenya, Cyprus, Borneo, Aden, Northern Ireland—not to mention Suez and many shows of force in other parts of the globe. The quotient of success has been high enough to encourage the belief in ruling circles that Britain has some special military destiny or world role. Military expenditures have always taken a large slice of the national budget. The Thatcher regime committed itself to maintaining this priority and acquiring new weapons systems. The military over-development of British capitalism both masks the decay of its domestic economy and complements the vigorous world role of the City. The Thatcher government has also encouraged a dramatic extension of the global reach of British capital: net overseas holdings have risen from £8 thousand million in 1979 to £28 thousand million by the end of 1981. Here again Argentina stands at the opposite pole with

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debts to the international banks and agencies of \$28 thousand million. To complete the contrast, while Argentina has been one of the best customers for the international arms trade, Britain—despite the sorry state of most of its industries—can still manage a respectable performance in weapons exports.

Paradoxically Britain has quite a strong peace movement as well as a vigorous militaristic tradition. The CND demonstration which took place at the height of the fighting in the South Atlantic was as large as any of its predecessors and manifested complete opposition to Thatcher's war. Yet it is evident that the movement now faces a grave challenge. In 1911, following the Agadir incident, Rosa Luxemburg addressed herself to the dangers of war in words that have gained in relevance: '... the game that is played on the volcanic terrain of international conflicts is, even for minds greater than these capitalist clerks, a game of blind-man's bluff. Mannesmann and Thyssen alone do not determine the further course of the adventure which, like all global blunders, can easily escape from the grasp of those who arranged it and grow from a frivolous game with matches into a global conflagration. And of course the critical forms of the conflict can be transferred . . . to South Africa or another part of the world. This is why, in our view, the duty of Social Democracy is not to reassure public opinion, but to do the very reverse, to arouse it and to warn it against the dangers lying dormant in all such adventures in international politics today. It is not enough for us to rely on the pacific intentions of some capitalist clique as a factor in achieving peace: we can only count on the resistance of the enlightened masses.'

IRON BRITANNIA: I Glare of War

When history repeats itself, the first time is tragedy, the second farce. Despite its Marxist origin, the aphorism is now a received wisdom. Perhaps that alone is good reason to abandon the idea. Certainly we have gone beyond it. The British recapture of the Falkland Islands was obviously a repeat performance, , although there is argument over precisely what was taking place again. It reminded some of the original eviction of Argentina by an English fleet in 1833, while Trevor-Roper compared it to the even earlier confrontation with Spain over the islands in 1770. The most apt and widely drawn comparison, however, has been with the Suez crisis of 1956. Indeed, when the British Parliament gathered on 3 April 1982 for a special Saturday debate on Argentina's invasion, readers of that morning's Times were told: 'The emergency sitting of the Commons will be the first on a Saturday since 3 November 1956, over Suez.' Yet the 1956 Anglo-French invasion of Egypt was itself a clownish attempt by the two European powers to recreate their colonial r domination over the Suez Canal. Today, therefore, British history has entered a new stage. We are witnesses to the repeat of a repeat, and as befits the late modern world it was played out on television and in the press. If the first time is tragedy and the second farce, the third is spectacle: the media event that was launched when the British fleet set sail for the South Atlantic.

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Will reality and spectacle eventually collide? It was remarkable how well the British public relations side of the Falklands affair stood up. It was helped, of course, by a quick and, in part, fortuitous victory. Nonetheless, the manipulation of opinion was at least as masterful (and as important) as the military operation. Initially a clear majority wanted to see no loss of life and, for some weeks after the task force had sailed, held that the Falklands were not worth a single British death. Yet 256 were killed on the British side, along with three Falklanders, and 777 wounded. Argentina suffered at least 1,800 dead, missing and injured. This casualty list was found acceptable. It was even seen as agreeably 'light', given the intensity of the combat. The figures were glossed as a measure of British military prowess, for being so low. But they were based on a gross miscalculation, not of the incompetence of Argentina's army—in which British estimates that it would fail to perform proved accurate—but in the persistence of its air force, predicted in the House of Commons by Tam Dalyell, a critic of the expedition. Indeed, if the 'profusion' of unexploded Argentine bombs had gone off, the story might have had another ending. Despite the skill of the British operation, 'it would have been impossible to continue', one officer commented, had the enemy ordnance been correctly fused.² Yet the British got away with it and now see this as a demonstration of their virtue. Britannia never shows remorse.

But if the British Government managed to 'wrap up' the Falklands War, and then to issue it on video, something else has been unwrapped in the process. For all the talk of truth being the first casualty of war, the Gothic excesses of conflict may clarify, especially as they bring domestic forces to a head. The glare of war can illuminate darkness just as the flash of lightning at night can reveal a white image of the surrounding landscape. When the darkness sets in again and the thunder rolls on, those who love the spectacle will talk about the lightning. I am interested in what it showed: in particular, what the Falklands war can tell us about Britain today.

In the postwar years when a welfare state of sorts was built in Britain and even pioneered in some respects, the country's image was of a society in social peace. True, this was disturbed by poor industrial relations at times. But mass unemployment was regarded as a thing of the past, not only because Keynesianism supposedly made it redundant, but also because unemployment would rend apart the special fabric of Britain's postwar consensus. In spite of all appearances, or indeed because of them, a classless sense of 'fair-play' was seen to preside over social relations within the UK. All loved the Queen, and the amusing antique ceremonies of monarchy thus unified classes and regions. The quiet sense of shared self-confidence was conjured up by the unarmed 'bobby'; the police were like uncles who kept a kindly eye out for understandable misdemeanors, crimes of passion and the very infrequent villain. There was no country like it.

It was never clear to me what proportion of the population actually believed this vision they were all supposed to share. It was a 'worldview'

¹ Guerdam, 10 July 1982

² Economist, 3 July 1982, p. 29, Observer, 11 July 1982

of the United Kingdom generated domestically, rather than a reality at any time. Yet it was also more than public relations. Its projection needed sincerity more than cynicism, even if that sincerity was self-deceptive.

But who could hold such a view today as the essential attribute of Britishness? The Falklands crisis coincided with the first anniversary of the death of Bobby Sands and the start of the campaign in which Thatcher linked the attitude of the government in Westminster directly to the death of prisoners in Northern Ireland. Riots followed in June 1981 right across England (significantly omitting the major cities of Scotland and Wales). A reaction to the brutal policing of blacks especially, the riots saw the full deployment of hit-squads by the police and the first mainland use of CS gas. The notable behaviour of British football gangs in Europe could now be seen as an expression of the 'real' England, rather than a youthful exception to it. Today, the Falklands expedition has completed this transfer of the British image in the eyes of the world—from phlegmatic bobby to enthusiastic commando.

In one sense its timing was accidental, determined by the troubles of Argentina and the strains within its military Junta. In another, the whole thing could not have come at a more convenient moment for the Thatcher administration. Her popularity rating, although recovering somewhat from a winter nadir, remained stubbornly low. The only bright spot on the horizon for Tory prospects was the intense division of opinion within the Labour Party that made it seem an improbable alternative. At the same time both the main parties are confronted by the liquidation of their duopoly. The rise of the Social Democrats in alliance with the Liberals threatens more than the usual challenge. For should they come even close to victory in the next election, proportional representation may be introduced and the structure and certainties of the old Parliamentary parties will be gone forever. After apparently faltering at the final gate, Roy Jenkins—the effective founder, 'statesman' and now leader of the SDP-won a critical Scottish by-election to return to the House of Commons on 1 April. The next day Galtieri's forces stormed Port Stanley.

The rise of the SDP, the fissures within the two main parties (the divisions amongst the Conservatives are less discussed but no less significant), the unprecedented volatility of the opinion polls, are all part of the general crisis in Britain—one now so protracted that the very word seems to induce a yawn Perhaps indeed it is the work of sleepwalkers. Certainly most discussion of the British crisis is either ponderously beside the point or sensationally trivial, as attention is displaced away from the political centre.

Slowly, however, the perceived location of the crisis has moved in on the country's masters, while material conditions continue to degenerate. The regiments of the unemployed have grown much faster than even the military budget under Thatcher's direction: officially three million, actually around four million, and the numbers beginning to experience the long-term debilitation of being unwaged mounting even more sharply. By the same token—or lack of it—bankruptcies have reached a record: 5,500 in the first half of 1982, a 75% rise on 1981. During the three

months of the Falklands War 226 companies went into liquidation every week, while a torrent of capital cascaded into overseas investments.³

The Falklands crisis was born of these circumstances. It joined the now venerable tradition of quack cures imbibed by the British political establishment in the hopes of a relatively painless solution to its woes. The media welcomed the dispatch of the task force with a zeal similar to its enthusiasms for anti-union legislation, entry into the Common Market, the advent of North Sea oil, or monetarism. (Perhaps the Falklands created a slightly greater spectrum between enthusiasm and scepticism than normal, but that was all.) In their time all these seemed marvellous ways to reverse Britain's decline without challenging the nature of sovereignty in the UK. After the Falklands victory, in a major speech at Cheltenham to which we shall return, Thatcher baptized 'the spirit of the South Atlantic', as the 'real spirit' of Britain. 'The spirit has stirred and the nation has begun to assert itself. Things are not going to be the same again.... Britain has ceased to be a nation in retreat.' In Thatcher's presentation, the long crisis is essentially over: Britain has been cured! In private, other politicians may scoff at such slight of hand, while they envy the conviction with which it is played. Meanwhile, they and Thatcher share as a controlling vanity the belief that whatever else may be wrong with the UK, at least 'the British know how to rule'. Thatcher may seem to have challenged this idea with her assault on gentrified amateurs and her cult of professionalism. But both notions, of 'professionalism' and 'amateurism' alike, as used in British politics today, share the same presumption that sovereignty is something that belongs to an elite by special right. The style of domination is in dispute and behind this there is a clash of interests, but no challenge to the received institutions of privilege. It is this which has made Thatcher's celebration of the Falklands War at one and the same time novel and conservative. She has given the Parliamentary nation a new expression, but she bas expressed its longings and desires to escape from accumulated frustrations. She may have exploited the opportunity of the Falklands War, but it was pressed upon her by Parliament itself.

Indeed, the key political event in the dispatch of the 'task force', which explains why it was sent into combat, and which itself must be explained if we are to seek the cause of the British response, was the behaviour of the House of Commons on 3 April, on the day after the Falklands were overrun, when Parliament sat for its special session. What happened then may have transformed the chemistry of British politics: it certainly injected into it an odious stench that will take a long time to clear. In party political terms the outcome was quite remarkable. Previously Thatcher had represented the aggressive wing of the Conservative Party and a definite minority within the country; harsh even balmy, high on monetaristic evangelism. Espousing the need for home-spun discipline, she stood for short, sharp government. Because she seemed to know what she was doing and what needed to be done, amidst dishevelled political alternatives who appeared to betray their confusion and incompetence, Thatcher retained a support much wider than her band of true followers. Yet she remained an extremist in a country that has always worshipped at the cult of moderation.

³ Gurrelien, 6 July 1982.

The Falklands debate changed that. The House of Commons overwhelmingly endorsed a gesture of military determination to salvage a national humiliation. As The Times put it, it was just like the Second World War when we went in to save the Poles. Except that there remains a difference between 1939 and today: the Poles were Poles, but the Falklanders are Britishl⁴ To listen to that Parliamentary debate on the radio was to enter into a kind of collective inanity, in which each speaker held up a distorting mirror for the others to admire themselves in—it was a self-consciously historic occasion.

It made Thatcher no longer the political outrider. She had come to power through a double Party crisis: the complacency of Labour under Callaghan allowed the Tories to win the 1979 election, while Thatcher herself had grabbed the Conservative leadership after Heath's demoralizing defeat in 1974. Though no longer an intruder, she remained a misfit until the April 3 debate elevated her into the war leader of a bi-partisan consensus. Or rather a multi-party unanimity, for both Liberals and the SDP spoke out vehemently against the nation's suffering at the crunch of Argentina's heel. Her new role only became clear after the debate, as the fleet set sail. It was Thatcher's navy. (The Queen's yacht Britannia was not dispatched even though it is especially equipped to be turned into a hospital ship in times of war.) During the debate itself, Thatcher and her government were rebuked by the House for having allowed the debacle on the islands to occur in the first place. She was shamed, yet she was also dared, even taunted into action, in particular by Enoch Powell:

The Prime Minister, shortly after she came into office, received the soubriquet as the Tron Lady'. It arose in context of remarks which she made about defence against the Soviet Union and its allies. But there was no reason to suppose that the Right Honourable Lady did not welcome and, indeed, take great pride in that description. In the next week or two this House, the nation and the Right Honourable Lady herself will learn of what metal she is made.

Apparently Thatcher nodded her head in agreement. Michael Foot was less personal but delivered just as strong a challenge. The House, the country, was 'paramountly concerned', he stated,

about what we can do to protect those who rightly and naturally look to us for protection. So far they have been betrayed. The Government must now prove by deeds—they will never be able to do it by words—that they are not responsible for the betrayal and cannot be faced with that charge.

'The Government must now prove by deeds...' By speaking thus Foot made himself the voice of the House of Commons that day. He was the spokesperson for its fervid assent to the expedition. The Tory Party—especially its right-wing—was suckled and drew comfort from his oratory; the Liberals were out-liberaled by his appeals to the small nations of the world; the SDP was shown what social democracy was all about; the Labour Party could look with pride upon its leader, he was better than Denis Healey after all. With morale all of a crumble on the Tory frontbench, it was Foot who gave true leadership. As he sat down, Edward du Cann, a leading Conservative back-bencher, rose to congratulate him:

⁴ The Times, 5 April 1982.

There are times in the affairs of our nation when the House should speak with a single, united voice. This is just such a time. The Leader of the Opposition spoke for us all. He did this nation a service when, in clear and unmistakable terms, he condemned what he called this brutal aggression and when he affirmed the rights of the Falkland Islanders to decide their own destiny.

Yes, Foot was Churchill and Foot was Bevan, rolled into one. He was the John Bull of the Labour movement; the world statesman confronted by the forces of evil; righteous and determined he spoke for the whole, united House. Foot called for action, Thatcher carried it out. He delivered the country into her hands.

Naturally Thatcher was obliged to do something if only to secure her own back-bench support. She had already announced that a task force was in preparation. Yet she did so with nervousness rather than self-confidence at the beginning of the debate. After Foot's demand, it became instead an Armada sailing at the behest of the House with the Prime Minister at the helm: the Commons thereby nationalized Thatcher's style of leadership—it was an Iron Britannia that emerged.

A Club for Dinosaurs?

Why did this take place? A key reason is the national and institutional place of Parliament itself and the false history which it gives to the ruling parties. When the House of Commons was bombed during the last world war, Churchill insisted that it be rebuilt to exactly the old specifications, as a stuffy chamber without desks. It remains today an artificially reconstructed club that has never taken the measure of its collapse from being the seat of Empire and arbiter of world history, so that it appears to us today like a political institution from the age of dinosaurs. A monstrous beast, capable of great noise and immeasurable consumption of putrid vegetable matter, it believes that it has been chosen to dominate the surface of the globe, yet it has a disproportionately tiny brain.

At any rate, in the House of Commons today, usually irrelevant and empty dramas are acted out in an anachronistic language. This has led many to think that it is no longer important and that power has passed to other places and circles. Not at all. Parliament is the seat of British sovereignty, especially in matters of war and peace, with which sovereignty is so directly connected. Parliament proved this on 3 April. Its frothing and raging were all the purer for being brought about by an object as insignificant as the Falklands. The mated, mutual evocation of the principles of British sovereignty by the leaders of all parties led to the almost instant birth of the 'task force'. Together they made a consensus of extremism. Michael Foot has written in praise of Disraeli for refusing to 'bow to the House of Commons in one of those swelling tempers when it converts itself into a mob'. On 3 April 1982, it was Foot himself who became the leader of the pack.

Doubtless it is not simply the institution of Parliament alone which is to blame. The law courts with their archaic distinctions; the Oxbridge

⁵ Michael Foot, Dobts of Honour, London 1980, p. 55

system; the feebleness of the civil service; that font of 'excellence' in Britain, the public school system—these are all part and parcel of the ruling arch, but one in which Parliament is the keystone. How can one describe the extraordinary influence of this political culture? Little incidents capture its flavour more than anything. In mid-May I had reason to talk to a stranger in Trafalgar Square. I wanted to ask him about the number of a bus which had gone by. He was a friendly looking man, probably in his 508, with a moustache and a stiff white collar, smoking an excellent cigar. So I asked him about the latest news from the South Atlantic, and then his opinion of the matter. 'It's noblesse oblige really, don't you think? Noblesse oblige. Otherwise we wouldn't be able to hold our head up high in the world'. I pointed out that they might sink the Queen Elizabeth, which would not do much for our world standing. He agreed, that was the risk we had to run. It wasn't jingoism. It wasn't said with any love of battle. There wasn't any hatred of the dagoes. Duty demanded it. We parted with a cheerio.

The attitude he expressed would seem as warm, as understandable and as irrelevant as the reminiscence of an immigrant grandfather about the Russo-Japanese war. It was not a chance encounter, in that the majority of those who think of themselves as members of a ruling elite in Britain share his wave-length. The only important qualification to add is that they remain skilful enough to stifle, if not silence completely, those voices which are radically different. Evidence of this during the Falklands crisis was the way the Financial Times appeared to be a straggler in the wilderness. It was unable to condemn the government unequivocally, yet all its reason told it that the affair was absurd. The bourgeois rationality of capital, or if that sounds too heavy, the plain calculation of good business, was almost unbearably self-evident. The Falklands were hardly worth a toss. It would be necessary to protect the way of life of its British community, of course, because how else could one be sure of safeguards for foreign business communities in Argenting or elsewhere? But the issue of sovereignty-and-righteousness could not be taken seriously in the absence of any definable substance, especially when it put at risk the very considerable interests of the City and British capital in Argentina and Latin America generally.

Yet in the House of Commons it was seen exactly the other way around. The invasion of the Falklands was nothing but an infringement of its dominion. Therefore, oddly enough, Argentina's action was completely and overwhelmingly an assault upon British rule itself: the House of Commons and the Crown. It was not just the insult of having one's small toe pinched by a Third World upstart that was humiliating. Because successive Governments had been trying to rid themselves of the islands and secure a closer relationship with Buenos Aires, because nobody in the Commons actually cared very much if at all-about the islanders, because they were anyway so few in number that they could easily have been given munificent compensation—a point we will come to in a moment because, in other words, there were no interests involved, it was purely a matter of spirit. Britain's 'standing' in the world was at stake. This was everything! Nothing real was being contested, therefore that most dangerously unreal aspect of international relations was at risk, the very aura of sovereignty itself, the sacred cow of the world order: credibility.

It was not punctured at the time. Perhaps because it felt the domestic crisis breathing down its neck, each party in its own way rallied to the call of history and the nation's 'honour'. Some leapt for joy, others scurned, many panted to catch up, plenty caught the whiff of intimidation, the job was done: the MPs had rallied to the flag. Only a despised 5% of them, mainly from the Labour left, managed some co-ordinated dissent later in the war. 6 They were quite unable to make any impact on the crucial first day when it began. One of them, Tam Dalyell, has argued that this was all due to chance and that if the invasion had taken place on a Thursday, say, rather than a Friday when MPs were dispersed, then wiser councils would have prevailed—especially his own on the response of the Labour front-bench. This is implausible, but Dalyell is right to stress that the role of Labour was crucial in the affair. He goes so far as to say that had Thatcher not known in advance that Labour would call for 'deeds'. she would not have announced the sending of the fleet. But even if she had, it could not have been used without the initial unity of Parliament.

Dalyell's account of the 3 April debate is especially interesting in one respect. The leaders of the House colluded to ensure that it was kept brief. The Commons assembled for the special Saturday session to set the country's face to war and adjourned after a mere three hours, during which the opening and closing speeches of the four front-bench speakers took nearly an hour and a half. Yet an attempt by one MP to have the time extended to five hours, so that more opinions could be heard, was voted down by the MPs themselves. The real judgement of such a collective is revealed precisely in adversity, when its response to a crisis matters. The combination of instinct, collaboration and procedure defined the true methods of British parliamentary rule.

The united House of Commons ensured a 'united nation' prepared to go into battle. As Peter Jenkins put it, it was not Thatcher's war but 'Parliament's war', because of this. It is therefore necessary, if we are to inquire into our rulers' capacity for dangerous folly, to examine the construction of this unity itself. And while it was a British occasion on 3 April, other states armed like the United Kingdom with nuclear weapons, are just as capable of their own demonstrations of sovereign pride. At the cost of some tedium, I will look at each of the speeches made during the great debate of 3 April. What does the 'true spirit' of the nation actually look and feel like? How does Great Britain go to war? Is this indeed the renaissance of a democracy discovering the virtues of firmness in a just cause? Is this the bedrock bealth of Britain? Or rather, when we look upon the proceedings of a united House of Commons do we find ourselves in the presence of the British disease itself?

⁶ After the debate on 20 May 1982, on the eve of the landings, 33 MPs voted against the use of force. Among them was Tony Benn (whose Falkland speeches can be read in E.N.D. Papers 3, Summer 1982); Tam Dalyell, the Labour spokesman for science, who fought Thatcher's militarism throughout; Andrew Faulds, Labour spokesman for the arts, who made a speech of outstanding vigour, Judith Hart, the current Chairperson of the Labour Party. Science and Art were promptly sacked as front-bench spokesmen, and were joined by Agriculture as Gavin Strang, Labour's spokesman for that industry, resigned, because although obliged to be absent from the vote he opposed the war. Two Plaid Cymru MPs also voted against the assault, their party was the only one to officially oppose the fighting.

¹⁷ Landon Review of Books, 20 May 1982.

At an occumenical "Teach-In Against the War', organized by the Socialist Society in London, 3 June 1982

II The Crackpot Parliament

Before we examine the specific contributions to the assemblage of 'national unity' invoked on 3 April, some background information is essential. The British went to war in a welter of fine words about protecting the right of peoples to 'self-determination', and the need to repel aggression so as to ensure that it does not 'pay'. Hardly a word of this was meant by those who actually insisted upon a military consummation. For a start, they sank the Belgram quite illegally, which unleashed the real fighting war. The importance of these questions is considerable only in that a great number of people who were not directly involved took them seriously. So I will discuss them towards the end of this essay, as principles in their own right. But in order to follow what happened in Parliament on 3 April, the questions posed by the specific, ambiguous status of the Falkland Islands should be registered.

Historically, it transpires that British officials have long had doubts as to the legitimacy of their country's claim to the Falklands. In 1910 Foreign Office memos thought Argentina's claim 'not altogether unjustified'. In the 1930s some kind of transfer of sovereignty was considered. In 1940 a file was titled, 'Proposed offer by HMG to reunite Falkland Islands with Argentina and acceptance of lease'. (The Sunday Times analysis emphasizes the word 'reunite'). In 1946 a UK internal research paper described the British seizure of the Islands in 1833 as an 'act of unjustified aggression'. Since 1965, when Argentina raised the issue at the United Nations, London and Buenos Aires have been negotiating. According to the Economist, 'the Argentines were encouraged to pursue a negotiated settlement by the fact that almost every British minister with whom they dealt came to recognize at least the de facto force of their claim'.²

What was the substance of this 'recognition'? It was perhaps summed up in a still confidential report by Labour's Ted Rowlands who visited the Falklands on behalf of the Callaghan government in 1977. His conclusion was 'keep British sovereignty over the islanders, but give Argentina sovereignty over the territory'. It was 'the people, not the land itself' which seemed to him to constitute the crucial issue. This distinction was met by a 'leaseback' proposal in which sovereignty would be granted to Argentina while government control remained in the hands of Britain. Rowlands's successor in Thatcher's administration was Nicholas Ridley who continued to pursue such a settlement. But before he went out to the Falklands in 1980 to consult the islanders, he was apparently subjected to a 'fearful mauling' of his ideas by the Prime Minister. Denied a clear mandate and restricted to presenting the leaseback idea as a mere 'option', the fate of Ridley's mission was predictable: 'The younger and more

¹ Sunday Times, 'Insight', 20 June 1982, based on research by Peter Beck.

² Economist, 19 June 1982

³ Martin Walker, Guerden, 19 June 1982.

cosmopolitan islanders tended to be sympathetic to some accommodation with Argentina; and the view was that between a third and a balf of the 1,800 population might have accepted some form of leaseback. Islanders of this persuasion argue that, had Mr Ridley come down with a firm announcement that the islanders had now to rethink their future, that the British were seeking leaseback and would compensate any islander who wanted to leave, the mood might have been more constructive. But Mr Ridley had been given no such mandate by the Cabinet. 14

We can therefore discern both a main current of British policy and an undercurrent pulling against it. The major thrust was to achieve a settlement that protected the *lives* of the resident people while assigning formal sovereignty of the terrain to Argentina. The undertow was primarily a Tory intransigence, shared by Thatcher, that played up the Islanders' additional wish to 'remain British' and ran counter to their evident best interests, and even the desires of many or perhaps most of them.

Argentina meanwhile tried to woo the islanders. The 'Malvinas' could become 'the most pampered region' of the country if they joined it, and Argentinian officials specifically offered 'a democratic form of government, a different legal system, different customs, a different form of education. The only thing they wanted was sovereignty'. It will help to bear these facts in mind when considering the response of British political classes to the Falklands crisis. Labour and Conservative governments had been striving to ensure that local law and administration remained 'British' and in the hands of the inhabitants while conceding sovereignty.

A major determinant in this apparent convergence towards a diplomatic solution was the economic and demographic decline of the Falklands community. In this context the final, impetuous Argentinian decision to launch a surprise invasion looks stupid, quite apart from being wrong. It is not inconceivable that political opposition on the Islands could simply have been bought out. Before the invasion, one farm manager reckoned that his farmhands would have left the Islands for £10,000. It seems that had they actually been offered this amount by Buenos Aires—or £20,000 or £50,000—most of the locally-born Islanders would have willingly followed the trail to New Zealand and elsewhere, already taken by a third of the population (and an increasing proportion of the young) since 1945. At an infinitesimal fraction of the eventual human and economic cost of the war, a combination of local self-government and generous compensation for emigration could have peacefully removed Britain's 'social base' from the Falklands.

Instead, the Junta ordered an invasion. After the takeover, play was made in the British press about how the Islanders had been forced to drive on the right instead of the left, and how those who refused to submit to this instruction bravely created bottlenecks for Argentinian troopcarriers. There are twelve miles of metalled road on the Falklands. The Junta

⁴ Economist, as cited. (My emphasis).

⁵ Ibid

⁶ II

instructed its forces to 'respect' the inhabitants. None of them or the small British garrison were killed in the invasion. On the day of the takeover, Galtieri stated that there would be 'no disruption' in the lives of the islanders. He also asked for an 'honourable agreement' with the UK. After the British reconquest, it was reported that Port Stanley was 'in much better shape than one might have expected'. Many untended homes had not been vandalized. The local people had been 'largely ignored' by the invaders. Snobbish to the end, the Junta had treated the inhabitants with the velvet glove traditionally applied to its country's privileged European settlements, rather than the brutal knuckleduster applied to the workers of Cordoba or the Indians in Tucuman province.

Against this, the line which Thatcher took was that British people were being subjected to intolerable oppression. In one interview she claimed that the islanders had been having a 'marvellous life' until they were invaded by thousands of soldiers of 'an alien creed'. The implication was that the Junta was trying to take over the people and reduce them to the oppressed status of its own citizenry. A similar argument was pursued by Noel Annan in his apologia for Thatcher in the New York Review of Books. O Somehow or other it seems that if we are not willing to countenance the use of war to free the Falklanders from their plight, then we have not learnt the lessons of the fate of the Jews in central Europe.

Only one aspect of this argument, if it can be so described, is potentially valid. The Junta are a lying and murderous lot who cannot be trusted. If a Falklander wanted to speak out against their methods or to demand parliamentary democracy in Buenos Aires, he or she could have been summarily rounded up. Thus it was right to demand that Argentina's forces be withdrawn and that independent protection of the islanders' civil rights be ensured. Sovereignty should have been ceded to Argentina, not for the nationalist reasons that it has advanced, but for the practical ones British officials of left and right had already deemed sensible (I will return to this issue in Chapter VI). At the same time the local government of those who desired to stay should have remained in their own hands. Given the Junta's basically pro-British feelings and their desire for an 'honourable' agreement, such an arrangement was not implausible, even without the use of economic sanctions.

However, even if we suppose the ridiculous and presume that the Junta really wanted to devour the souls of the islanders with its 'alien creed', would it then have been proper to use force? The answer is surely 'no' for at least two reasons. First, the territory of the Falklands should belong to Argentina anyway. Second, the numbers involved make such a proposition absurd. This is not accidental. As I also argue in Chapter VI, the tiny number of Falklanders makes any idea of their own political independence 'bloody ridiculous', to use the formulation of Harry Milne, the Stanley manager of the Falkland Islands Company. ¹¹ So too the dispatch of the task force. The costs of the expedition have not yet been totted up,

⁷ The Tures, 3 April 1982.

John Shirley, Sanday Times, 20 June 1982.

⁹ Interview on the 10.00 pm BBC News, 23 June 1982.

^{10 15} July 1982, p. 21.

¹¹ Patrick Bishop, Observer, 20 June 1982.

but on the British side alone they will probably total between £1.5 and £2 billion. Every single local-born Falklander, man, woman and even child, could have been given compensation of £100,000 each and £10,000 a year per head for twenty years, and the costs would have been less than a tenth of the war and the projected cost of a garrison, leaving aside the grave loss of life. Money not arms was the solution.

There are today about 1,300 locally-born inhabitants still on the islands. 12 They call themselves 'Kelpers' after the giant Kelp seaweed of the South Atlantic. It is not hard to detect a note of stoical disparagement of their own conditions in the term. Their society could only have improved with the 'pampering', stability and trade that would have accompanied the Argentinian flag. The Kelpers would have joined the privileged Anglo-Argentine community, not the 'disappeared ones', and could have retained all their rights as British subjects except for their subjugation to the House of Commons, had not that chamber decided, in its own egocentric interests to go to war for the Falklands.

This applies with a special vengeance to Margaret Thatcher perhaps, but it also goes for the Labour leadership, which endorsed the need to 'liberate' the Falklands and restore freedom to the islands. Labour did support the development of the task force, but suen then as we are about to witness it declined to make any distinction between the lives of the people and sovereignty over the territory. It thus reneged on its own approach to the issue when in office. Labour it can be observed, went out of its way to dismiss the offers of the Junta and to secure the fatal elision of land and inhabitants that made the struggle over the Falklands a primitive clash of national sovereignty between Britain and Argentina.

The Honourable Lady Speaks

The fateful debate was opened by Thatcher. These were her first words:

The House meets this Saturday to respond to a situation of great gravity. We are here because, for the first time for many years, British sovereign territory has been invaded by a foreign power. ¹³

After describing the first information she had received, she went on:

I am sure that the whole House will join me in condemning totally this unprovoked aggression by the Government of Argentina against British territory (Honourable Members: 'Hear, hear'.) It has not a shred of justification, and not a scrap of legality.

She gave more details of takeover, then stated:

I must tell the House that the Falkland Islands and their dependencies remain British territory. No aggression and no invasion can alter that simple fact. It is the Government's objective to see that the islands are freed from occupation and are returned to British administration at the earliest possible moment.

¹³ All quotations from the debate taken from *Hausard*.

¹² 'The 1980 census showed a population of 1,813 of which 1,360 were born in the Islands and 302 in Britain'. (*The Falkland Islands and Dependencies*, Reference Services, Central Office of Information, London March 1982, p. 1)

Thus the entire initial position taken by the Prime Minister was concerned with the issue of territorial sovereignty, not the islanders. There can be little doubt that this was a true expression of her feelings. What had been usurped for her was something that belonged to Britain. This was the primary, the national, fact. She then went on to deal with the secondary issue:

Argentina has, of course, long disputed British sovereignty over the islands. We have absolutely no doubt about our sovereignty, which has been continuous since 1833. Nor have we any doubt about the unequivocal wishes of the Falkland Islanders, who are British in stock and tradition, and they wish to remain British in allegiance. We cannot allow the democratic rights of the islanders to be denied by the territorial ambitions of Argentina.

Two things are significant about this statement. First, as we have seen, there was in fact a consistent record of official British attempts in recent times to negotiate away sovereignty. Second, one can observe the wilful fashion in which the Prime Minister elided the territorial question with the democratic rights of the islanders. Consider, for instance, their British tradition', which never gave them a vote in the election of their own Governor or conferred ux citizenship. Thatcher demagogically made no attempt to distinguish the Kelpers' real traditions so as to seek their preservation; instead, she made the appointment of their local ruler from London the defining and definitive attribute of their way of life. Moreover, she proceeded to claim:

Over the past 15 years, successive British Governments have held a series of meetings with the Argentine Government to discuss the dispute. In many of these meetings elected representatives of the islanders have taken part. We have always made it clear that their wishes were paramount and that there would be no change in sovereignty without their consent and without the wishes of the House.

This statement seems to have been false. To have held to it would have been the equivalent of the British Government asserting eternal sovereignty. And Thatcher was soon to back away from the 'paramountcy' of the islanders' desires during the period of diplomatic manoeuvering, only to reinstate it as a rhetorical imperative on the eve of victory. The important thing to note, therefore, is the we being made of the 'wishes' of the islanders, to justify London's claims.

Thatcher next tried to explain why no concrete steps had been taken to prevent an Argentinian take-over which had been forewarned weeks, if not months in advance. She was uncomfortably aware that in 1977 Callaghan had quietly dispatched a nuclear submarine and two frigates to the South Atlantic in a successful gamble to force the Junta back to the negotiating table after intelligence reports of a possible attack. This precedent placed Thatcher in a difficult partisan position and provided one of the key tensions of the debate. Her political image had been constructed around the projection of determination, resolution and iron fidelity to national defence—yet here the stereotypes were reversed. It was the ex-Labour Government, whose members were now sitting opposite, which could claim to have achieved all these things where she had failed. They had acted where she had deserted 'kith and kin'. Indeed,

how could the embattled Labour front-bench, desperate for favourable publicity, possibly refrain from such an accusation when it caused Thatcher such pain?

The prospect was intolerable. Her reaction was to strike back and not only at Argentina. First she dredged up the case of South Thule. If you think that the Falklands are remote, try to find South Thule on the map. It is an uninhabitable dot close to the Antarctic below South Georgia. Thatcher claimed that it had been 'occupied' by Argentina in 1976 but that the traitors in the Labour Party did not even tell the House about this appalling transgression until 1978 (Buenos Aires had established a 'scientific' post there). She was interrupted by a questioner: surely South Thule was 'a piece of rock', there was 'a whole world of difference' between it and the 'imprisonment of 1,800 people' by Argentina. Not at all, answered Thatcher, 'We are talking about the sovereignty of British territory—which was infringed in 1976'. Although her efforts at baiting the opposition did not go down well in the chamber, the point was quite logical. It demonstrated the priorities to which she was attached. The sovereign territory might have well been no more than a lump knee-deep in bird droppings, all the same it was our land. A woman who puts millions out of work has no sense for the reality of a people. Rather, it is their abstract 'virtues' which stir her heart, as she made clear in her final sentences:

The people of the Falkland Islands, like the people of the United Kingdom, are an island race. Their way of life is British; their allegiance is to the Crown. They are few in number but they have the right to live in peace, to choose their own way of life, and to determine their own allegiance. Their way of life is British; their allegiance is to the Crown. It is the wish of the British people and the duty of Her Majesty's Government to do everything that we can to uphold that right. That will be our hope and our endeavour and, I believe, the resolve of every Member of the House.

There is no such thing as 'an island race' and it is most unlikely that Thatcher would speak in such laudatory tones about the Maltese or the Filipinos. But the thing to observe is the way the wishes of 'the people' have been used, by deliberate confusion, to stand in for the wishes of the Government in London. The right to live in peace, the right to choose one's own way of life, these are powerful and important—they refer to tranquillity, security, education, religion, language and jobs. The right to determine one's 'allegiance' 18 slightly different. (It has an odd, rather feudal ring, partly because it is not, 'the right of self-determination', i.e. statehood). To go on to say, 'Their way of life is British, their allegiance is to the Crown', is to elide and compress together the attributes of their actual community existence with the Union Jack above their heads. It is to ignore, wilfully and deliberately, the possibility of distinguishing these two aspects, a practical possibility in this case because of the tiny numbers involved. When Thatcher stated that she already believed it to be the resolve of every member to give back to the Falklanders their 'rights', she was sending the hurricane of war to defend their 'right to live in peace'. It was not their lives she sought to defend, it was rather British sovereignty over them, and more generally 'Britishness' itself.

The Voice of Moral Imperialism

Michael Foot then rose and immediately made it clear in what way for Labour it was people not territory that mattered:

The rights and the circumstances of the people in the Falkland Islands must be uppermost in our minds. There is no question in the Falkland Islands of any colonial dependence or anything of the sort. It is a question of people who wish to be associated with this country [read: ruled by it] and who have built their whole lives on the basis of association with this country. We have a moral duty, a political duty and every other kind of duty [read: military] to ensure that that is sustained.

Here again it is possible to see how the islanders' lives were inextricably conflated with British rule over them, only this time under a cloud of moral purity. How damaging this stance was not only for Britain but for the islanders, was revealed in Foot's subsequent words:

The people of the Falkland Islands have the absolute right to look to us at this moment of their desperate plight, just as they have looked to us over the past 150 years. They are faced with an act of naked, unqualified aggression, carried out in the most shameful and disreputable circumstances. Any guarantee from this invading force is utterly worthless—as worthless as any of the guarantees that are given by this same Argentine Junta to its own people.

Note Foot's sweep as a historian, at home with the previous century-anda-half in the most detailed way and also his characterization of 'unqualified aggression'. What he would have said if the Argentine forces had killed anyone can hardly be imagined. But what is most interesting here was his dismissal of the worth of any guarantees. This was his response to the offer made by Galtieri to let the Falklanders keep their own way of life (just as have many Welsh communities in Patagonia more successfully, it could be added, than in many parts of Wales). Foot confused a 'guarantee' with a mere verbal promise, a conflation in which mental disorganization and deliberate misinterpretation seem to have been combined. Certainly to have taken the mere word of the Junta on trust would have been craven, but a 'guarantee' could mean international invigilation and enforcement. Here, perhaps, was a means of securing the islanders' way of life, and the withdrawal of Argentinian troops, and even a lucrative financial settlement. But—and this is the all-important point-Foot would not even allow such an option to be considered, let alone explored in seriousness. Despite the lofty calibre of his words, he was no more concerned than Thatcher with the actual human lives involved. His interest was in a greater cause:

[to] uphold the rights of our country throughout the world, and the claim of our country to be a defender of people's freedom throughout the world, particularly those who look to us for special protection, as do the people in the Falkland Islands. (my emphasis.)

Foot then examined the conduct of the Thatcher Government, pointedly contrasting its lack of foresight with Labour's prescience in 1977. This led him to the conclusion already quoted, that the Tories had 'betrayed' the islanders and now needed to 'prove by deeds' that they could make good their record. Because, Foot stressed, it was necessary after all to qualify our primary concern with the Falklanders themselves:

Even though the position and the circumstances of the people who live in the Falkland Islands are uppermost in our minds—it would be outrageous if that were not the case—there is the longer term interest to ensure that foul and brutal aggression does not succeed in the world. If it does, there will be a danger not merely to the Falkland Islands, but to people all over this dangerous planet.

Now it is perfectly clear that as a result of the Falklands' expedition, small nations and good causes will not sleep easier in the world. How could those who desire a more just and less alarming planet wish more power to the likes of Margaret Thatcher? So far as Britain's 'particular' interests are concerned, as expressed by those who look to it for protection, Belize and British Guyana have been cited. The latter has a powerful neighbour. Venezuela, which claims a substantial part of its territory. Will the British response to the Falklands' seizure deter Venezuela more than would have an extended diplomatic campaign to ensure the community rights of the Kelpers? On the contrary. For instead of arming the politicians in Caracas with a powerful case to rein in their military, British reaction in the South Atlantic is just as likely to ensure an increase in the Venezuelan military budget. Exocet missiles and submarines will be added at great expense, funded by oil revenues. The greater the superiority achieved, the more likely it becomes that it will be used. This is so obvious that Michael Foot's motivation can hardly have been a real desire to ensure more peaceful relations internationally. But nor is it the case that he had radically changed his attitudes from the man who campaigned for British unilateral nuclear disarmament during the 1950s. There is an underlying continuity of attitude between the strand of opinion he belonged to then and his position on the Falklands crisis: the tradition of British liberalism.

It has long been remarked that the first CND campaign (1957-63) saw a renewal of the British liberal tradition of protest, that goes back to opposition to the slave trade. Humanitarian antagonism to the unnecessary and inhuman excesses of the world was the characteristic feature of this stance. It never challenged the system which produced such horrors and rather avoided any overall, systematic theory, for fear of dogmatism and ideological excess on its own part. Michael Foot is a contemporary embodiment of this tradition and exemplifies one of its most unpleasant aspects: its moral imperialism. For behind the presumption that a British voice must speak out against violations of humanity elsewhere (which is welcome), lies the assertion that the Anglo-Saxon accent can and should arbitrate across all frontiers. The globalism of the liberal conscience in this case is not a true internationalism. Despite its attractive aspects, its core is a presumption of national superiority. This was captured in the first CND campaign by one of the arguments for unilateralism: it would 'set an example for the world'. Britain would 'lead the way by its behaviour'. While a strand of English liberal moralism, then, is truly and properly appalled at the threat of mankind's absolute destruction in a nuclear exchange—and so protested against the infamous prospect of our genocide—another strand expressed the specific sense of national impotence. No longer a great power, subject to the fateful decisions of Washington and Moscow, Britain which had supposedly 'won the war' found it had lost any power to arbitrate the peace. The fate of the world was slipping inexorably from London's hands. Only a magnificent

gesture, while some power to deflect events remained, could ensure a permanent legacy of influence.

Foot's sentiments over the Falklands are an archetypal expression of this liberal imperalism. The people are 'uppermost' in his mind, so far 'up' as to be out of sight, it transpires, while it is the 'longer-term' question that predominates. 'Foul and brutal aggression', that led to no loss of fife amongst those aggressed, requires that the planet itself be policed against further danger. This is often the rallying cry of the metropolis as it seeks to maintain a world order. American officials justified their intervention in Vietnam on the same grounds; was not the 'domino theory' merely a more regional specification of the dangers of 'global example' espoused by Foot?¹⁴

How did Foot defend himself, when he came under criticism? In response to an open letter from Anthony Arblaster in Tribune, Foot argued that he had been assailed without any mention of the United Nations. 15 Its Charter is the 'centrepiece' of Labour's case, he wrote. 'Everything I have said has been governed by Labour's allegiance to the Charter.' The 'future prospects for peace throughout the world' as well as 'Labour's reputation', depended upon the Party honouring its international responsibility to the UN. In his view, the difference between the Suez and Falklands crises is that in the Falklands, Britain has acted 'in conformity with our United Nations obligations'. The argument is spurious. International opinion is almost uniformly that the squabble between the UK and Argentina is about national pride, while allegiance to the UN does not imply that Britain had to counter-attack the Junta's forces. Resolution 502 which called for the immediate withdrawal of Argentine forces also called on both sides to resolve their differences diplomatically and demanded 'an immediate cessation of hostilities'. Furthermore Article 51 hardly extends the right of self-defence to non-national, dependent territories 8,000 miles away, whose sovereignty has already been placed on the negotiating table by the 'defending' country. 16

Perhaps because he sensed the weakness of his appeal to trans-national legalism, Foot concluded his defence by tarnishing his once notable anti-fascist record. He drew a parallel with the Spanish Civil War. Thatcher, it seems, was leading the Republican side against a Franco-like invasion. Just as *Tribum* had done nothing to give aid and comfort to Franco in the thirties, so it should now abominate any support for General Galtieri, instead of demanding the recall of the task force. Funny, that Labour had sold many arms to the Argentine Junta. Eric Heffer, an ambitious Labour leftist, equally endorsed Thatcher's response because,

¹⁴ Foot's attitude is also a variant of what F S. Northedge has termed the 'national arrogance', which he describes as 'the most persistent assumption in British thinking on foreign policy'. Namely: 'the idea that the rest of the world is rather like an unruly child which has a divine obligation to defer to its elders and betters like the British... but which from time to time may be prevented from doing so by either sheer stupidity, or suppression by some upstart dictator...' (Descrit from Power, London 1974, p. 360).

¹⁵ Tribune, 14 and 21 May 1982.
16 Article 51 of the UN Charter reads. 'Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures to maintain international peace and security'

'The Labour Party cannot agree to a bunch of fascist military thugs being allowed to do just what they like'. Nobody had suggested that they should. Just as Galtieri's claim that he is dedicated to the struggle against colonialism is nothing more than the mirror image in hypocrisy to Thatcher's assertion that she must defend the Falklanders' 'right to self-determination', so Foot's or Heffer's declaration that the Falklands War is a struggle against fascism also twins the Junta's demagogy.

The Chinese and Irish Connections

It is necessary to leave the squabble in Labour's ranks to return to the less elastic mentality of the Conservative MPs. Michael Foot was followed in the debate by Edward du Cann, a great oak in the Tory bramble patch. As I've already noted, he immediately thanked Foot (one almost writes 'Sir Michael') for the way he 'spoke for us all'. The issue was straightforward, du Cann continued:

Let us declare and resolve that our duty now is to repossess our possessions and to rescue our own people. [Note the order.] Our right to the Falkland Islands is undoubted. Our sovereignty is unimpeachable. British interest in that part of the world, in my judgement, is substantial. It is substantial in the Falkland Islands, however trivial the figures may appear to be. It is substantial in the sea, which has yet to yield up its transvers. It is also substantial in Antarctica. (My emphasis.)

Is that why our boys have gone to die? To protect our treasures in the Antarctic bleakness? Our companies will be able to yield it up. They will not be subject to our domestic rates of taxation, for it is a long way to the South Atlantic and we must be reasonable. Nonetheless, 'we' will be able to invest the profits abroad where they can earn 'us' the best rate of return. Thatcher's government is particularly splendid in this respect. For example, in the first two years of her administration, the outflow of capital after she lifted all exchange controls, came to £8,600,000,000. That is a very substantial British interest deposited overseas. How could these, 'our' possessions, be safe, if we did not fight for them when necessary? Du Cann continued on another note:

In the United Kingdom, we must accept reality. For all our alliances and for all the social politenesses which the diplomats so often mistake for trust, in the end in life it is self-reliance and only self-reliance that counts. . . . We have one duty only, which we owe to ourselves—the duty to rescue our people and to uphold our rights. Let that be the unanimous and clear resolve of the House this day. Let us hear no more about logistics—how difficult it is to travel long distances. I do not remember the Duke of Wellington whining about Torres Vedras. (Honourable Members: 'Hear, hear'.) We have nothing to lose now except our honour. [Oh yes, and those substantial interests mentioned earlier.]

With the exception of my impertinent parenthesis, that was how du Cann concluded his historic intervention, adding that he was sure the nation's honour 'was safe in the hands of my honourable friend', a reference to Thatcher, both accolade and threat. It is ironic to compare the ravings of du Cann with the available thoughts of Mao Tse-tung. Self-reliance is one common theme. Voluntarism is another, Mao's attitude to moving

mountains was similar to Du Cann's on distance. Equally, for Mao, 'every Communist must grasp the truth. "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun"'. For du Cann, it seems, Mao's reality is one the United Kingdom must accept.

This Chinese parallel may seem far fetched, yet it recurs. In its post-victory editorial, for example, *The Economist* celebrated the Falklands War because 'Britain has long needed its own sort of cultural revolution'. This ideological uplift is badly needed in the ux and America, it goes on to argue, because those under fifty regard military values as a bit of a joke. The Cultural Revolution itself, of course, initially placed the People's Army and its barracks version of Maoism in command of Chinese civilian life. A world away from Thatcherism, but is it accidental that the civilizations of countries that were once great empires and are now second-rank powers should foster similar longings?

Du Cann was followed by Enoch Powell. Powell was a monetarist before monetarism, a man of race before the race question. He was dismissed from the Conservative front-bench by Heath, he left the Tory Party over the Common Market, and he now represents a Northern Ireland seat as a Unionist MP. He holds Margaret Thatcher in his thrall. Powell began on an Ulster note. He demanded that proposals concerning the future of Northern Ireland, that were going to be presented to the Commons on the Monday, should be withdrawn. He regarded the Irish policy under development as designed to detach the North from the UK, in collusion with the southern Republic. Although his request was not echoed subsequently, the issue certainly explains part of the Tory venom over the Falklands. For after more than a decade of wearsome fighting and huge expense. Powell feared that London was beginning to consider the abandonment of Ulster. There too, a majority of the population wishes to remain British'. Yet as every politician and journalist who has listened to Ian Paisley knows, those who follow his Orangeman's pipe and drum are absolutely Irish. Yet the Protestant Irish say they are British, and they fly the Union Jack with a fervid passion that can only be found in such places as Gibraltar and . . . the Falklands. Hence the central aspect for British politics of the 'right' of the Falklanders to stay governed by the Crown. They do not seek self-determination and their land is claimed by another state. Give way on this, and the position of the Ulstermen becomes more precarious. The integrity of the nation itself—the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland—might be threatened. Thus on the British side the Falklands War had an Orange pigmentation that the rest of the world largely failed to perceive.

Powell went on to demand the court martial of the handful of Royal Marines who surrendered to the larger Argentine invasion force the previous day, because the Secretary of State for Defence had commented in an interview that 'no British soldier ever surrenders'. Evidently, therefore, they had disobeyed orders and brought 'infamy to this country'. (Both he and the Secretary seemed to have forgotten Singapore.) Fortunately, Powell's amnesia was only partial. He was able to pluck out of his memory the wonderful coincidence that the

¹⁷ In its lead editorial, 19 June 1982

'Invincible' was the name of the capital ship in the British naval force that sank Von Spee's flotilla in a famous battle off the Falklands in December 1914. This was the example the Government should follow:

There is only one reaction which is fit to meet unprovoked aggression upon one's own sovereign territory: that is direct and unqualified and immediate willingness—not merely willingness, but willingness expressed by action—to use force. The Government have set in train measures which will enable them to do that; but there must be nothing which casts doubt upon their will and their intention to do it.'

He then went on to emphasize that the country would now see whether Thatcher was indeed the 'Iron Lady'.

Powell was followed by Sir Nigel Fisher, a Tory back-bencher and right-winger. His intervention struck a marginally new note. He seemed to suggest that there was probably little the Government could do: Britain has been humiliated. What can now be done? One's natural instinct is to get the invaders out, but it is much easier said than done.' Perhaps Argentina could be excluded from the World Cup.

'Whatever action is decided upon, this is a deeply depressing and distressing episode. We have failed—and failed lamentably—to defend the integrity of one of Britain's few remaining colonies.'

No expense should be spared for the task force. The only possible excuse for the Government was that Ministers did not know that the invasion was a 'possibility'. Even that would not be very good. Fisher compared the Argentine fast accomple to the Nazi seizure of Norway in 1940. That, he pointed out, led to the fall of Chamberlain. It was quite a heavy number for a back-bencher with distinction to address to his own front-bench. One felt the call of his nostalgia: 'one of the few remaining colonies'!, as if this was a rare species the state had a duty to protect if only to prevent its extinction.

In the Same Mould: the SDP

It was next the turn of Dr David Owen, who spoke for the new 'mould-breakers', the Social Democratic Party. Although the sop was created to inject some bourgeois sense of proportion into the country's politics, along with Europeanism—a rather radical ambition as one can see—on this issue it was itself completely shaped by the received conventions. The past was too heavy for the sop at the vital moment when it had an opportunity to break away from Westminster's dormitory consciousness. Owen was Foreign Minister in Callaghan's Labour Government, which had 'saved' the Falklands in 1977 through preemptive naval deployment. He generously told the House about his own heroic role. Furthermore, his constituency is Plymouth, whence Drake set out against the Spanish in 1587.

The Government have the right to ask both sides of the House for the fullest support in their resolve to return the Falkland Islands and the freedom of the islanders to British sovereignty.

Dr Owen cultivates his youthful looks and his open, non-ideological style. Perhaps imagining himself a new John Kennedy, he recommended

a 200-mile naval blockade zone around the Falklands, and cited the precedent of the Cuban missile crisis. How apt. The Falklands should be repossessed and the spr would support the Government in office to sustain this end, because servicemen's lives 'might be put at risk'. Tam Dalyell rose and asked Owen to give way for a question. Owen refused, with an interesting response which shows that he knew he was silencing the voice of an opponent to the task force. 'There is no question of anyone in the House weakening the stance of the Government', Owen stated flatly. A wonderful thing, democracy. Dalyell rose again, but Owen ignored him to conclude: 'The House must now resolve to sustain the Government in restoring the position.' And so the Westminster spr kept in with the mob.

Sir Julian Amery was then recognized by the Speaker, who so selected one of the more right-wing members of the House. For Amery, 'The third naval power in the world, and the second in NATO, has suffered a humiliating defeat.' With these opening words, he went on to attack the Foreign Office, particularly Lord Carrington, then the withdrawal from the naval base in Simonstown, South Africa, and next the run-down of the navy. He could not believe that the intelligence services had failed to detect the Argentine build-up. But:

We have lost a battle, but have not lost the war. It is the old saying that Britain always wins the last battle. [Suez, for example?] I seek . . . two simple assurances. The first is that we are determined to make the Argentine dictator disgorge what he has taken—by diplomacy if possible, by force if necessary . . . nothing else will restore the credibility of the Government or wipeth stain from Britain's honour.

The Biblical archaism stiffened credibility all round. Britain will wipeth last.

A Labour voice was heard. He too had been involved in the 1977 action when his Government saved the Falklands. Furthermore, Ted Rowlands had a goddaughter in Port Stanley, who was there with her mother, in Argentinian hands. He had been involved with the islands 'over many years', and knew a lot about their people:

If the honourable lady [Thatcher] meets the islanders, which I hope she will do—and I hope we shall succeed in freeing them—she will find that they are passionate believers in parliamentary democracy. They listen to and watch everything that we say and do in the House. It is one of their most remarkable characteristics. Even the most obscure parliamentary question is followed and debated in the Falkland Islands.

What with that and looking after 600,000 sheep, it's little wonder that most of them have remained laconic. But given how closely the Falklanders followed *Hansard*, how could the Government possibly have failed to follow the build-up of Argentinian intentions? Rowlands referred to his experience in office in 1977:

We found out that certain attitudes and approaches were being formed. I cannot believe that the quality of our intelligence has changed. Last night the Secretary of State for Defence asked, 'How can we read the mind of the enemy?' I shall make a disclosure. As well as trying to read the mind of the enemy, we have been reading its telegrams for many years.

Rowlands went on to relate how be had gone to Callaghan with information in 1977 and the then Prime Minister (and not David Owen?) had instructed the covert dispatch of a naval force. Now it was essential to restore the rights of the Falklanders 'as urgently as possible'. If the Government Ministers cannot do this, 'they should go'.

The islanders have already paid a high price for the initial set of blunders. They have lost their freedom for the first time in 150 years. The guilty men should not go scot free if we do not retrieve the islands as quickly as possible.

In Parliamentary terms, the pressure of this argument was very strong. It gave the Government no room for manoeuvre. 'We saved it, you have lost it, either you get it back or get out.' Had it been unemployment that was being debated, the rhetoric would be regarded as dull—run-of-the-mill verbiage that could be ignored if anyone bothered to listen. But it was the nation's honour that was at stake, in a contest in which each party seeks to represent the Nation, at the expense of the other.

Patrick Cormack followed, a representative of Tory sagacity at its deepest. Michael Foot was great, 'for once he truly spoke for Britain'. So too did Dr Owen. This should give 'fortification' to the Prime Minister.

But what a blunder, what a monumental folly, that the Falkland Islanders should be incarcerated in an Argentine gaol.... It was not right that the Foreign Secretary should have been absent from the United Kingdom during this week.... These things must be said because we are talking about redeeming a situation. We are talking about restoring credibility. That is restoring the credibility not merely of a set of politicians and of a Government, but of our nation. We must all be determined to do that. [My emphasis.]... This is one of the most critical moments in the history of our country since the war.... I should think that there will be some anxious people in Gibraltar today. (An Honourable Member 'And in Hong Kong'.) There will also be anxious people in Hong Kong.... Therefore, our united resolve from today must be to utilize the unanimity that has been expressed in the debate.

Unless the Government did so atilize this unanimity Cormack warned, he would leave the Tory benches.

Arthur Bottomley was selected next from Labour. Would he finally staunch the flow of gibberish from the other side? No. He simply asked the Prime Minister a brief question: would she assure our friends 'that so long as the Falkland Islands and their inhabitants wish to remain in the Commonwealth, Britain will see that they do so?' Eh? It seems that Bottomley's national-internationalism had not yet caught up with the un and that he still believes in the Commonwealth. It was its only mention as an institution. But then Bottomley was Colonial Secretary when the Smith Junta seized power in Rhodesia....

Bottomly was followed by a Conservative, Raymond Whitney, who was interrupted six times in ten minutes by formal questions and was subjected throughout to an intense and furious barrage of heckling and

disruption from his own side of the gangway. Whitney had worked in Argentina for the Foreign Office during the early seventies, and thus knew something about the matter. This was intolerable. 'The Foreign Office was not working for Britain', said the first interjector, Teddy Taylor. The sixth and last objected intensely to Whitney's suggestion that 'there are alternative ways in which the interests of the Falkland Islanders can be protected and I feel that these can be achieved by negotiation.' Sir John Biggs-Davison of Epping Forest was beside himself, and interrupted on a point of order: 'If defeatism of this kind is to be spoken, should it not be done in secret session? Would it be in order to spy strangers?' Over the howls and caterwauls, Whitney retorted: 'it is not a question of defeatism—it is a question of realism and the avoidance of another humiliation for our country.'

This was the only point in the whole debate in which the interests of the islanders as people were directly addressed. The reality was unbearable. For the House they were symbols of British pride; of the country's holy freedoms (to be unemployed, to love the Queen but not to vote); of democracy; of sovereignty. Whitney pleaded with the collective wisdom of the Commons: could it not consider the consequences of war carefully? Would not the implications of a successful landing mean a military presence for years?

I earnestly implore the House to think very carefully, so that we make sure that we are ready to take and answer the challenges of the questions that are there. They will not go away if they are not enunciated.

It was a brave but futile effort, like asking a cage of parrots to think before they speak.

The Foreign Affairs representative of the Liberal Party rose. Perhaps he, at least, would also bring some thought to the affair. He reprimanded Whitney, however, and told him: 'This is without doubt a very shameful day for this country.' In that he was correct, if not in the way he imagined. Russell Johnston (of Inverness) then quoted from an editorial in the Guardian, which stated, 'the Falkland Islands do not represent any strategic or commercial British interest worth fighting over (unless one believes reports of crude oil under its off-shore waters).' It was an odd assertion, playing the issue on both sides of the street and thus failing to keep even to the middle of the road. Exactly how much oil would be 'worth' fighting for, and exactly how many dead would make it worthwhile, and to whom, are questions that could fill pages with evasive answers. Johnston was clever to upbraid it. It allowed him to score a cheap point and proclaim that it was the 'rights and freedoms of individual people' that mattered. He was 'depressed' and 'angry' to see photographs of Galtieri looking pleased. Johnston then told the House how he was a member of the Falkland Islands Association. He had followed the issue and knew that government after government had starved the place of funds. Now 'vast amounts of money will have to be spent'. 'If we are to act at all, we must act swiftly.'

The Foreign Office under Attack

Sir John Eden was then selected to address the House with his distinctive

point of view. The Foreign Office, he thought, or at least 'elements within it', 'have been wanting to be rid of what they have regarded as a tiresome problem.' How dull and sensible. But now, revenge would be exacted, to preserve by force one of the few remaining colonies as Sir Nigel Fisher had described it. The species would not be allowed to become extinct while knights such as Sir Nigel and Sir John had any sway. Force must be mounted, said Sir John, the Government was committed, Thatcher should make sure that her commitment, 'is carried through to the earliest possible fulfilment. The honour of the country demands nothing less.'

Donald Stewart, a Scottish Nationalist from the Western Isles, was then recognized. He too had constituents who worked in the Falklands and he was also a member of the Falklands lobby. The sequence of Sir John Eden followed by Donald Stewart, as speakers in the 'debate', revealed one of its determining patterns. On the one hand a succession of ultra-rightwing Tories from the South Coast (Sir John Eden represents Bournemouth West); on the other, MPS from the Celtic fringe with Falkland interests. It would be hard to think of a less representative combination for the defence of British democracy. Argentina's claims to the sovereignty of the Falklands were 'totally unfounded' according to Stewart. The Government should have been prepared. 'I hope that this matter can be resolved without force, but if force is necessary, so be it.'

The MP for Honiton, Devonshire, came next. Sir Peter Emery regarded the House as 'absolutely unanimous', with 'perhaps one exception'.

The British House of Commons is determined to ensure that the British Falkland Islands people shall be removed from the yoke of the Argentine Government. . . . We must risk nothing that could bring about defeat. . . . If that action of withdrawal has not been taken within 10 or 14 days supulated by the Government, a state of war should exist between Argentina and Britain.

At last a pillar from the Labour Party rose, a man of experience with a constituency in a major city: Douglas Jay from London's Battersea. But it was possible to distinguish him from the previous speaker only by the degree of grammatical coherence and ordered phraseology that he brought to his demand for war.

The Foreign Office is a bit too much saturated with the spirit of appearement. I hope that, apart from anything else, the Foreign Office will now examine its conscience, if it has one. Second, I trust... that there will be no cash limits on any effective action that we now take. Thirdly... Diplomacy can succeed only if it is visibly supported by effective action... What matters now is that these people wish to remain British, and that is the right to self-determination... as the whole history of this century has shown, if one gives way to this sort of desperate, illegal action, things will not get better, they will get worse.

It is possible to discern the difference in mental attitude of the southern Tory knights from that of the squires of Labourism. The former are more intensely patriotic. It is the internal decay and shrivelling of what it means to be British, that upsets them. For the Labour nationalists, however, it is the decline of Britain in the world that matters, theirs is the more external, global and 'historical' perspective.

Up popped Sir Bernard Braine (Conservative), to prove the point. He began his remarks with an astute observation of the occasion: 'This remarkable debate has been characterised by high-calibre speeches showing acute perception of the problem.' And he went on to add his own finely engineered perceptions, concluding:

The time for wessel words has ended. I expect action from the Government; and I hope that we shall get it. However, let there be no misunderstanding. Unless the Falkland Islands are quickly restored to lawful British sovereignty, and unless their people are freed from the dreadful shadow under which they have lived for a decade or more, the effect on the Government will be dire.'

He had already stated that he would withdraw his support from the Government if it failed in its duty. In Parliamentary terms, this meant that Sir Bernard and his bunch of diehards would support an Opposition motion of censure on the Government for its handling of the Falklands, unless Thatcher and her Cabinet acted with full determination. Only 30 fanatics would be needed to march into the lobby behind Michael Foot and Douglas Jay to bring down the appearers.

Sir Bernard's speech was not quite finely calculated enough, in the tactical sense. Had he gone on foaming a bit longer, his would have been the last contribution to the 'debate' before the two winding-up speeches from the front-benches. Nor was the full force of Sir Bernard's passion communicated by the tidy columns of Hansard.

The very thought that our people, 1,800 people of British blood and bone, could be left in the hands of such criminals is enough to make any normal Englishman's blood—and the blood of Scotsmen and Welshmen—boil too.

It was so much finer to hear than to read. He was apoplectic: 'B B B British b b b blood and b b bone' he stammered. 'Any normal Englishman's b b blood', he raved on, in full flight, drugged on ethnicity, when some slight mental process stirred as he recalled that it was Britain, not England, he was supposed to speak for. The islanders are—to a man (women have yet to enter his consciousness as other than victims it seems)—mainly Scottish and Welsh. The English who are involved with the Falklands to any significant degree are its absentee landlords, shareholders in the Falkland Islands Company and Empire-minded MPs. So Sir Bernard quickly injected the blood of the Scotsman and the Welshman back into the boiling brew.

An outsider coming into the visitors' gallery of the House of Commons at that moment might have asked why the honourable member's blood was so disturbed. Was it because four million of his fellow citizens had been deprived of a paying job? Was it that good, higher education was being dismantled in the United Kingdom? Was it that a million of Sir Bernard's fellow Englishmen who happen to be black were being subjected to excessively firm police measures? Was it even due to the Falkland Islanders being deprived of their right of 'self-determination'? Of course not. It was none of these things. The visitor would simply have witnessed the froth and curdle of an old ruling class now going off its rocker.

A House 'United'

Finally, a voice from Scotland was heard to demand some—a bit—of proportion. George Foulkes was recognized. We know why as Tam Dalyell has explained, I went to the Speaker's Secretary, standing by his chair, to ask him to call a dissenting voice'. Thus the great 'debate' had been a pre-selected beauty contest with only those whose patriotic features were deemed bulbous enough, allowed to display themselves before the public. The Speaker gave way at the very end. Foulkes had four minutes to 'dissent'. But he felt completely on the defensive:

I have some reservations about what seems to have been emerging, almost unanimously, as the view of the House.

He was interrupted, and replied:

My gut reaction is to use force. Our country has been humiliated. Every honourable member must have a gut reaction to use force. But we must also be sure that we shall not kill thousands of people in the use of that force. . . . I am against the military action for which so many have asked because I dread the consequences that will befall the people of our country and the people of the Falkland Islands.

Gut reactions and the sentiment of dread were hardly a convincing way to argue an alternative.

The two concluding speeches followed, the first from John Silkin, Labour's shadow spokesman for defence. His was probably the most hypocritical of all the contributions. He began by claiming that Michael Foot was now 'the leader of the nation'. The day was not one for judgements or recriminations however—Silkin agreed. He then dedicated his entire speech to often skilful recriminations against the Government and judged that the Prime Minister should go. She, the Secretary for Defence and the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 'are on trial today'. Silkin's conclusion to them: 'The sooner you get out the better.'

Between scoring points against the Thatcher Government, Silkin assured the House that, 'Our thoughts are with our fellow citizens in the Falkland Islands' (his thoughts were thus not at all on gaining office for himself). With Parliament so steamed up, nobody would interject that the Falklanders were not in fact 'fellow citizens' but second-class subjects. Silkin had a more touching sentiment yet:

I make one appeal above all others to the Government. Let us ensure that our dear fellow citizens in the Falkland Islands are kept in touch with us as much as possible. Let us extend our broadcasts.

As for Galtieri, the worst in a bunch of fascists,

When he says to us that he will respect the rights and property and, above all, the lives and freedom of our people, we have a right to wonder whether this is true in view of what he does to his own people.

Oh, he said that, did he? It is strange that nobody mentioned the Junta's pledge during the debate, in which the Falklanders' 'rights' figured so

¹⁸ London Review of Books, 20 May 1982.

prominently. Only Michael Foot had glimpsed the possible embarrassment of this aspect of the Argentine take-over, to dismiss it in advance. Fortunately, with the debate being so short and the speakers so 'representative', no mp who spoke was foolish enough to demand that the Junta's offer be seriously tested. Naturally, one would have to do much more than 'wonder' at the veracity of Galtieri's promise; yet measures could have been suggested to help ensure that such a promise was observed. To speak like this, however, would be to speak treason: to face realities and care for people rather than defending sovereignty. No such blackguard rose to shame the House from the opposition front-bench.

John Nott, Secretary of State for Defence, then made the final contribution to the day's discussion. He did not address himself seriously to the future. Almost all of his speech concerned the past, as he tried to defend the Government's lack of preparation. How could it have allowed Argentina to have walked over the Falklands? Why had he not taken some preemptive action to deter the aggression, as Labour had in 1977? Wasn't it he who had run down the navy? Nott struggled with little conviction to defend the record. Goaded beyond endurance he asked the House:

If we were unprepared, how is it that from next Monday, at only a few days notice, the Royal Navy will put to sea in wartime order and with wartime stocks and weapons²... I suggest that no other country in the world could react so fast and the preparations have been in progress for several weeks

Several weeks? An exceedingly interesting suggestion, especially as it came from the Secretary of State for Defence himself.

Nott then concluded. He told the House that the situation was 'extremely grave'.

We intend to solve the problem and we shall try to solve it continuingly by diplomatic means, but if that fails, and it will probably do so, we shall have no choice but to press forward with our plans. (My emphasis)

One of these 'plans' had already fallen into place:

We can at least. . give to the armed forces the unanimous backing of the House in the difficult task that they are being asked to undertake.

The 'unanimous' House of Commons adjourned. Britain had been sent to war.

III Churchillism

To listen to the House of Commons debate on 3 April 1982 was like tuning in to a Wagnerian opera. Counter-point and fugue rolled into an all-enveloping cacophany of sound and emotion. Britannia emerged once more, fully armed and to hallelujahs of assent (accompanied by fearful warnings should She be again betrayed). A thunderous 'hear, hear' greeted every audacious demand for revenge wrapped thinly in the call for self-determination. Dissent was no more than a stifled cough during a crescendo of percussion: it simply confirmed the overwhelming force of the music.

Later, opposition would make itself heard above the storm. But it was drowned out at the crucial moment. In part this was arranged. As we have seen, scheming took place to ensure a 'united House'. MPS took six days to debate entry into the Common Market in 1973. They went to war for the Falklands in three hours. The result was to preempt public discussion with a fabricated consensus. In the immediate aftermath of Argentina's take-over of the islands, most people could hardly believe it was more important than a newspaper headline about some forgotten spot. Suddenly they were presented with the unanimous view of all the party leaders that this was a grave national crisis which imperilled Britain's profound interests and traditional values. The decisive unity of the Commons was thuggish as well as inspired. The few who feared the headlong rush were mostly daunted and chose the better part of valour. Innocent islanders in 'fascist' hands, the nation's sovereignty raped: it seemed better to wait and let things calm down. The war party seized the occasion with the complicity of the overwhelming majority of MPs from all corners of Parliament. On 3 April there was scarcely an opposition to be outmanoeuvred. The result was that even if one continued to regard the Falklands as insignificant, there clearly was a Great Crisis. Within what is called 'national opinion' there was no room to disagree about that: one had either to concur or suffocate. The Commons united placed British sovereign pride upon the line; and sovereignty is not a far away matter, people feel it here at home just as they identify with their national team in a World Cup competition however distant. With a huge endorsement from the press, Parliament had ensured that the nation—so we were told—spoke with one voice, had acted with purpose and solidarity and had thus gambled its reputation on a first-class military hazard.

Many trends were at work—consciously or blindly—to prepare for such a moment. But much more important, and what gave the militants the 'unity' essential to their cause, was the general condition that allowed them to succeed so handsomely. It held the Commons in the palm of its hand. It orchestrated the one-nation sentiments of the three geniuses of the occasion—Enoch Powell, Michael Foot and David Owen—who bound Thatcher so willingly to Hermes. To analyse this general

condition properly would take a thick book, for it has many symptoms. Moreover the condition is so deeply and pervasively a part of England, so natural to its political culture, that it is difficult to see, impossible to smell as something distinct. Like the oxygen in the air we breathe, and which allows flames to burn, it is ordinarily intengible. Perhaps the Falklands crisis will at last bring it into sight. The virtually unanimous dedication of the British political classes to an international idiocy has drawn a line easily visible to the rest of the world. It may now come into focus within the United Kingdom as well.

The Churchillian Cartel

To provoke and assist this discussion of the pathology of modern British politics, I will be bold and assertive. Yet it should be borne in mind that I am only suggesting a possible description; one which will certainly need correction and elaboration. First, we need a name for the condition as a whole, for the fever that inflames Parliamentary rhetoric, deliberation and decision. I will call this structure of feeling shared by the leaders of the nation's political life, 'Churchillism'. Churchillism is like the warp of British political culture through which all the main tendencies weave their different colours. Although drawn from the symbol of the wartime persona, Churchillism is quite distinct from the man himself. Indeed, the real Churchill was reluctantly and uneasily conscripted to the compact of policies and parties which he seemed to embody. Yet the fact that the ideology is so much more than the emanation of the man is part of the secret of its power and durability.

Churchillism was born in May 1940, which was the formative moment for an entire generation in British politics. Its parliamentary expression was a two-day debate which ended on 8 May with a crucial division on the Government's conduct of the war. Churchill himself had already entered the cabinet which remained under Chamberlain's direction. After the hiatus of the 'phony war', an attempt by the British to secure control of Norway had ended in disaster. Although Churchill also bore responsibility for the misadventure, it was Chamberlain who was felt to be out of step with the time. Attlee asked for different people at the helm. From the Conservative back-benches Leo Amery repeated a testy remark of Cromwell's, 'In the name of God, gol'. The Government's potential majority of 240 crashed to 80 and in the aftermath Churchill emerged as Prime Minister with, as I will discuss in a moment, the crucial support of Labour to create a new National Coalition. Then, within days, the war took on a dramatically different form, and then a catastrophic one, as the Germans advanced across Holland and into France. The British army was encircled and the order to evacuate given on 27 May. Through good fortune some 300,000 were pulled back across the Channel and Dunkirk became a symbol not only of survival but also of 'national reconciliation' and ultimate resurgence as it coincided with the emergence of Churchill's coalition.1

At that moment Churchill himself was a splendid if desperate enemy of European fascism, while Churchillism was the national unity and

¹ Keith Middlemas, Politics in Industrial Society, London 1979, p. 376

coalition politics of the time. Among those who participated most enthusiastically, there were some who wanted to save Britain in order to ensure the role of the Empire and others who wanted to save Britain in order to create a new and better order at home. But Churchillism was more than a mere alliance of these attitudes. It incorporated imperialists and social democrats, liberals and reformers. From the aristocrats of finance capital to the autodidacts of the trade unions, the war created a social and political amalgam which was not a fusion—each component retained its individuality—but which nonetheless transformed them all internally, inducing in each its own variety of 'Churchillism' and making each feel essential for the whole.

Today Churchillism has degenerated into a chronic deformation, the sad history of contemporary Britain. It was Churchillism that dominated the House of Commons on 3 April. All the essential symbols were there: an island people, the cruel seas, a British defeat, Anglo-Saxon democracy challenged by a dictator, and finally the quintessentially Churchillian posture—we were down but we were not out. The parliamentarians of right, left and centre looked through the mists of time to the Falklands and imagined themselves to be the Grand Old Man. They were, after all, his political children and they too would put the 'Great' back into Britain.

To see how the Falklands crisis brought the politicians at Westminster together and revealed their shared universe of Churchillism, it will help to note the separate strands which constituted it historically: Tory belligerents, Labour reformists, revolutionary anti-fascists, the liberal intelligentsia, an entente with the USA (which I will look at at greater length as its legacy is crucial) and a matey relationship to the media.

1. Tory Imperialists

In 1939 only a minority of the Conservative Party supported Churchill in his opposition to appearement. Their motives for doing so were mixed. The group included back-bench imperialists like Leo Amery—the father of Sir Julian Amery, who spoke in the Falklands debate—and 'one country' reformers like the young Macmillan. A combination of overseas expansionism and social concessions had characterized Conservatism since Disraeli: a nationalism that displaced attention abroad plus an internal policy of gradualist, paternalistic reform.

Churchill, however, stood on the intransigent wing of the Party. Unlike Baldwin, Churchill had ferociously resisted the rise of Labour, and his belligerency in the General Strike made him an enemy of the trade unions until he finally took office in May 1940. Three years previously Baldwin had retired and been replaced by Chamberlain who was efficient but also aloof and stubborn. He proved incapable of assimilating Labour politicians into his confidence and he saw the imperative need for peace if British business interests were to prosper. By continuing to exclude the restless Churchill from office, Chamberlain perhaps ensured that he would see the opposite. Thus Churchill, who had initially welcomed

² Later it included Communists although on a temporary basis, but a figure like Kim Philby can be seen as one personification of the Churchillist arc.

Mussolini as an ally in the class war, became the most outspoken opponent of Fascism as a threat to British power. There was no contradiction in this, but rather the consistency of a Toryism that in the last instance placed the Empire and Britain's world role before the immediate interests of profit.

2. Labour and Reformism

As emphasized earlier, it is essential that Churchill and Churchillism be rigorously distinguished. While the man had been among Labour's most notorious enemies, the 'ism' contains Labour sentiment as one of its two major pillars. In terms of Churchill's own career, the transformation can be seen in 1943, when he sought the continuation of the coalition government with Labour into the postwar period. Conversely, the Labour Party's support was crucial in Churchill's accession to power in May 1940. Chamberlain had actually maintained a technical majority in the vote over the failure of the Norwegian expedition; but the backlash was so great that his survival came to depend on Labour's willingness to join his government. It refused, asserting that it would only join a coalition 'as a full partner in a new government under a new Prime Minister which would command the confidence of the nation'. Within the hour of receiving this message, Chamberlain resigned.

It is important to recall that Chamberlain's regime was itself a variety of coalition government. At the height of the depression in 1931, Ramsey MacDonald had decapitated the Labour Movement by joining a predominantly Conservative alliance. This incorporation of part of the Labour leadership into a basically Tory government was a triumph for Baldwin, vindicating his strategy of deradicalizing the Labour movement through the cooptation of its parliamentary representatives. By the same token, the creation of the 1931 National Government was a defeat for the hardline approach of Churchill. The great irony of 1940, then, was that Labour attained its revenge by imposing the leadership of its former arch-enemy on the Tory Party. The alliance which resulted was also quite different from the National Government of 1931: that first coalition broke the Labour Party while in 1941 it was the Conservatives who were 'shipwrecked'.⁴

Churchill dominated grand strategy but Labour transformed the domestic landscape. Emest Bevin, head of the Transport and General Workers Union, became Minister of Labour and a major figure in the War Cabinet. Employment rose swiftly as the economy was put on a total war footing and for the first, and so far only time in the history of British capitalism, a significant redistribution of wealth took place in favour of the disadvantaged. While adamant in his attitude towards strikes and obtaining a more complete war mobilization than in Germany, Bevin ensured the extension of unionism and improvements in factory conditions. Both physically massive men, the collaboration of Churchill and Bevin personified the contrast with the earlier pact between Baldwin and Macdonald. The 1931

³ Paul Addison, The Reed to 1945, London 1977, p. 100

⁴ As above, p. 62. Addison's judgement in full is that the National Coalition resulted from the public shipwreck of a Conservative administration, and the corollary was that Labour were not in reality grows office, they broke in and took it, on terms of moral equality'

National Government was a formation of the centre based on compromise at home and abroad. The two prime actors in 1941 were men of deeds, determined to pursue their chosen course. Once enemies, they now worked together: an imperialist and a trade unionist, each depending upon the other.

Within the alliance, the centre worked away. To compound the ironies involved, some of the Conservatives who most readily accepted the domestic reforms were from the appeasement wing of the party. Butler, for example, who disdained Churchill even after the war began, put his name to the 1944 Education Act that modernized British education (though it preserved the public school system). But the administrative reformists of the two main parties never captured the positions of ideological prominence. Bevin was more a trade union than a Parliamentary figure, Attlee led from behind, and Labour in particular suffered from its inability to transform its 'moral equality' into an equivalent ideological hegemony over the national war effort that Churchill exercised.

3. Anti-Fascism

Overarching the centre was an extraordinary alliance of left and right in the war against fascism. Those most outspoken on the left were deeply committed to the war effort (even when their leading advocate in the Commons, Aneurin Bevan, remained in opposition). The patriotic anti-fascists of both Left and Right had different motives but both had a global perspective which made the destruction of Nazism their first imperative. When the Falklands war party congratulated Michael Foot—the moral anti-fascist without equal on the Labour benches—for his stand, it was like a risible spoof of that historic, formative moment in World War Two when the flanks overwhelmed the centre to determine the execution of the war.

Yet it was not a hoax, it was the real thing; it related to 1940 as damp tea-leaves to a full mug. The Falkland's debate was genuinely Churchilian, only the participants in their ardour failed to realize that they were the dregs. This is not said to denigrate either the revolutionaries or the imperialists of the World War. Their struggle against fascism was made a mockery of in Parliament on 3 April: for example, when Sir Julien Amery implicitly and Douglas Jay explicitly, condemned the Foreign Office for its 'appeasement', just because it wanted a peaceful settlement with Buenos Aires, or when Patrick Cormack said from the Tory benches that Michael Foot truly 'spoke for Britain'. 5

Above all, it was a histrionic moment for Foot. Although frequently denounced by the Right as a pacifist, he was in fact one of the original architects of bellicose Labour patriotism. Working on Beaverbrook's Daily Express he had exhorted the Labour movement to war against the

⁵ This mimicked Leo Amery's famous parliamentary intervention on z September 1939, literally the eve of World War II, when he shouted across to the acting Labour leader Arthur Greenwood after Chamberlain had failed to announce an ultimatum for war 'Speak for England, Arthur' A. J. P. Taylor, England History, 1914–1945, Oxford 1965, p. 452.

Axis. In particular, in 1940 when he was 26, he inspired a pseudonymous denunciation of the appeasers called The Gully Men, published by Gollancz. Foot demanded the expulsion of the Munichites—listed in the booklet's frontispiece from the government, where Churchill had allowed them to remain. The Guilty Men instantly sold out innumerable editions. It contains no socialist arguments at all, but instead is a dramatized accounting of the guilt of those who left Britain unprepared for war and the soldiers at Dunkirk unprotected. It points the finger at Baldwin and MacDonald for initiating the policy of betrayal. On its jacket it flags a quote from Churchill himself, 'The use of recriminating about the past is to enforce effective action at the present'. Thus while the booklet attacks both the Conservative leadership of the previous decade and the Labour men who sold out in 1931, it impeaches them all alike on patriotic grounds: they betrayed their country. Churchill's foresight and resolve, by contrast, qualify him for national leadership—only for the sake of the war effort, the remaining 'guilty men' had to go.

It was precisely this rhetoric—the language of Daily Express socialism—that was pitched against the Thatcher government in the 3 April debate by the Labour front-bench. Foot denounced its leaders for failing to be prepared and for failing to protect British people against a threat from dictatorship. The 'Government must now prove by deeds . . . that they are not responsible for the betrayal and cannot be faced with that charge. That is the charge, I believe, that lies against them.' (my emphasis) Rounding up, John Silkin elaborated the same theme, only as he was concluding the debate for the opposition he was able to bring the 'prosecution' to its finale, in the full theatre of Parliament. Thatcher, Carrington and Nott 'are on trial today'; they were 'the three most guilty people'.

4. Liberalism

The political alliance of Churchillism extended much further than the relationship between Labour and Conservatives. The Liberals were also a key component, and this helps to explain why an important element of the English intelligentsia was predominantly, if painfully, silent at the outbreak of the Falklands crisis. In 1940 the Liberals played a more important role in the debate that brought down Chamberlain than did Labour spokesmen, with Lloyd George in particular making a devastating intervention. Later, individual Liberals provided the intellectual direction for the administrative transformation of the war and its aftermath.

Keynes was its economic architect, Beveridge the draughtsman of the plans for social security that were to ensure 'no return' to the 1930s. Liberalism produced the 'civilized' and 'fair-minded' critique of fascism, which made anti-fascism acceptable to Conservatives and attractive to aristocrats. Liberalism, with its grasp of detail and its ability to finesse issues of contention, was the guiding spirit of the new administrators. Because of its insignificant party presence, its wartime role is often overlooked, but liberalism with a small 'l' was the mortar of the Churchillian consensus. One of Beveridge's young assistants, a Liberal at

the time, saw the way the wind was blowing and joined the Labour Party to win a seat in 1945. His name was Harold Wilson.⁶

5. The American Alliance and 'Self-Determination'

Churchillism was thus an alliance in depth between forces that were all active and influential. Nor was it limited to the domestic arena; one of its most important constituents has been its attachment to the Anglo-American alliance, and this was Churchill's own particular achievement. Between the wars the two great anglophone powers were still as much competitors as allies. During the 1920s their respective general staffs even reviewed war plans against one another, although they had been allies in the First World War. The tensions of the Anglo-American relationship four decades ago and more may seem irrelevant to a discussion of the Falklands affair; yet they made a decisive contribution to the ideological heritage which was rolled out to justify the dispatch of the Armada.

When Churchill took office in 1940 Britain was virtually isolated in Europe, where fascist domination stretched from Warsaw to Madrid, while the USSR had just signed a 'friendship' treaty with Germany and the United States was still neutral. Joseph Kennedy, the American ambassador in London (and father of the future President), was an old intimate of the Cliveden set and a non-interventionist. He had advised Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, that the English 'have not demonstrated one thing that could justify us in assuming any kind of partnership with them'. But Roosevelt, eminently more pragmatic, saw that genuine neutrality would allow Hitler to win; it would lead to the creation of a massive pan-European empire, hegemonic in the Middle East and allied to Japan in the Pacific. On the other hand, by backing the weaker European country—the United Kingdom—the us could watch the tigers fight. Continental Europe would be weakened and Britain especially its Middle East positions—would become dependent on Washington's good will. In other words, it was not fortuitous that America emerged as the world's greatest economic power in 1945, it simply took advantage of the opportunity that was offered. But this opportunity also provided Britain with its only possible chance of emerging amongst the victors. At question were the terms of the alliance.

On May 15, immediately after he became Prime Minister and just before Dunkirk, Churchill wrote his first letter to Roosevelt in his new capacity. He asked for fifty old American destroyers and tried to lure the President away from neutrality. The Americans in turn suggested a swap arrangement that would give them military bases in the Caribbean, Newfoundland and Guyana. The trade of bases for old hulks was hardly an equal exchange, but by deepening American involvement it achieved Churchill's overriding purpose, and allowed the President to sell his policy to Congress. Later, as Britain ran out of foreign reserves, Lend-Lease was conceived. The United States produced the material of war while the British fought, and in the meantime, relinquished their

⁶ Harold Wilson's father was a deputy election agent for Winston Churchill in 1908 when Churchill was standing as a liberal. Patricia Murray, Margaret Thatcher, London 1980, p. 94.
⁷ Robert Dallek, Franklin D. Resisselt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–45, New York 1979,

p 163

once commanding economic position in Latin America to Uncle Sam.⁸ (So when Peron—whose country had been a British dominion in all but name for half a century—challenged the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon bankers in 1946 by resurrecting the irredentist question of the Malvinas, it was a demagogic symbol of already fading subordination that he singled out. The real economic power along the Plata now resided in Wall Street rather than the City).

Four months before Pearl Harbor, the 'Atlantic Charter' (August 1941) consolidated the Anglo-American alliance and prepared us opinion for entry into war. The Prime Minister and the President met off Newfoundland and agreed to publicize a joint declaration. The main argument between them was over its fourth clause. Roosevelt wanted to assert as a principle that economic relations should be developed 'without discrimination and on equal terms'. This was aimed against the system of 'imperial preferences' which acted as a protectionist barrier around the British Empire. Churchill moderated the American position by inserting a qualifying phrase before the clause. Behind the fine words of the Atlantic Charter there was a skirmish and test of wills between the two imperialisms. Although we can now see that the Charter was determined by self-interest, its function was to enunciate democratic principles that would ensure popular and special-interest support in both countries for a joint Anglo-Saxon war. Both governments announced that they sought no territorial aggrandizement or revision that did 'not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned'. Although Churchill later desired that this in any way related to the British colonies, and was to declare in 1942 that he had not become Prime Minister to oversee the liquidation of the British Empire, he also claimed to have drafted the phrase in the Charter which states that the ux and the us would 'respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live'. There is a direct lineage between this declaration and Parliament's reaction to the Falklands.

By the end of the year America had entered the war as a full belligerant. On New Years Day 1942 twenty-six allied countries signed a joint declaration drafted in Washington which pledged support to the principles of the Atlantic Charter. Henceforward the alliance called itself

⁸ In 1938, 40% of all Latin American imports came from Britain, by 1948 only 8%, Gabnel Kolko, *The Politics of War*, London 1969, p. 493. Kolko is very clear on Anglo-American nivalry.

⁹ Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 3, London 1950, Chapter 24 For a discussion of the arguments this caused within British imperialist circles, see Wm Roger Lewis, *Imperialism at Bay 1941–1945*, Oxford 1977, Chapter 6 Clause 5 of the Atlantic Charter provides an important addition for any discussion of Churchillism. While Roosevelt and Churchill were locked in their political struggle, the British War Cabinet back in London, under Artilee's chairmanship and at Bevin's suggestion, proposed a further clause to the draft they were sent. This would proclaim improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security for all people. The supreme leaders agreed, but significantly rejected the suggestion that the 'abolition of unemployment and want' become a general war sim. Alan Bullock, *The Life and Times of Ernest Barra* vol. 2. London 1967, p. 69. Bullock adds, 'It is impossible to read the Atlantic Charter now without a sense of distillusion, but at the time it raised great hopes. To Bevin it was a cause of some satisfaction that he had succeeded in getting both the British and American Governments to accept in principle the concern with the economic and social problems which he believed ought to figure as prominently as political factors in the post-war settlement.'

the 'United Nations', and three years later a world organization of that name assembled for the first time. In its turn it enshrined the principles of 'self-determination' codified by Roosevelt and Churchill.

In his memoirs Churchill is quite shameless about the greatness of the empires, British and American, that collaborated together against the 'Hun'. But he cannot hide the constant tussle for supremacy that took place between them, within their 'Anglo-Saxon' culture, in which each measured its own qualities against the other. From their alliance, forced on the British by extreme adversity, came their declaration of democratic aims. Its objective was to secure support from a suspicious Congress that saw no profit in bankrolling an Empire which was a traditional opponent, and which was detested by millions of Irish and German-American voters. It had, therefore, to be assuaged with the democratic credentials of the emerging trans-Atlantic compact. Thus, in order to preserve the Empire within an alliance of 'the English speaking nations', Churchill—imperialist in bone and marrow—composed a declaration of the rights of nations to determine their own form of government.

In international terms, this ambiguity is the nodal point of Churchillism. By tracing, however sketchily, its outline, we can begin to decode the extraordinary scenes in the House of Commons on 3 April this year. Above all, it clarifies the ease with which those like Thatcher utilized the resources of the language of 'self-determination'. When she and Foot invoked the UN Charter to justify the 'liberation' of the Falklands because its inhabitants desire government by the Crown, they reproduced the sophistry of the Atlantic Charter. What particular resonance can such terms have for the British Right, when in other much more important circumstances like Zimbabwe they are regarded as the thin wedge of Communist penetration? The answer is to be found in Churchillism, which defended and preserved 'Great' Britain and its imperial order by retreating slowly, backwards, never once taking flight, while it elevated aspirations for freedom into a smoke-screen to cover its manceuvre.

In 1940 what was at stake was Britain's own self-determination. Invasion was imminent and an embattled leadership had to draw upon more than national resources to ensure even survival. Together with the invocation of specifically British values and tradition, Churchill revived the Wilsonian imagery of 'the great democratic crusade' (a rhetoric that had been improvised in 1917, in response to the Russian Revolution). Such ideals were crucial not only for the North American public but also for anti-fascist militants in the UK and for liberals who loathed warfare—the experience of 1914-18 was still fresh-and distrusted Churchill especially for his evident pleasure in conflict. They were uplifted by the rallying cry that gave both a moral and political purpose to the war as it coupled the UK to its greatest possible ally. While Churchill saved Great Britain, preserved its institutions and brought its long colonial history to bear through his personification of its military strengths, he did so with a language that in fact opened the way for the Empire's dissolution. The peculiarity of this explains how Britain could shed—if often reluctantly and with numerous military actions—so many peoples and territories from its power after 1945 without undergoing an immediate convulsion or indeed any sort of outspoken political crisis commensurate with its

collapse. Instead a long drawn-out anaemia and an extraordinary collective self-deception was set in train by Churchillism.

Perhaps the Falklands crisis will come to be seen as a final spasm to this process of marked decline. Many have seen it as a knee-jerk colonialist reaction. Foreigners especially interpret the expedition to 'liberate the' Kelpers' as a parody of Palmerstonian gunboat diplomacy, out of place in the modern world. It may be out of place, but its impetus is modern in British terms rather than Victorian. The stubborn, militaristic determination evinced by the Thatcher government, her instant creation of a 'War Cabinet' that met daily, was a simulacrum of Churchilliana. So too was the language Britain had used to defend its actions. Both rhetoric and policy were rooted in the formative moment of contemporary Britain, the time when its politics were reconstituted to preserve the country as it 'stood alone' in May 1940. ¹⁰ Although a majority of the population are today too young to remember the event, most members of Parliament do, and the mythical spirit of that anxious hour lives on as a well-spring in England's psyche.

6. Incorporation of the Mass Media

There is one final aspect of Churchillism that needs to be mentioned: the relationship he forged with the media. He brought Beaverbrook into the Cabinet, attracted by the energy of the Canadian newspaper proprietor. He had himself written in the popular press and took great care of his relations with the papers, in sharp contrast to Chamberlain who disdained such matters. Churchill's broadcasts rallied the nation as he skilfully crafted together images of individual heroism with the demand for general sacrifice. No subsequent politician in Britain has been able to forge such a bond between leader and populace as Churchill did through his voice alone.

The relationship was, and is, especially important because of the way the policies of the State are literally 'mediated' to the public via the political and geographical centralization of the national press. London dominates through its disproportionate size, its financial strength and the spiderweb of rail and road of which it is the centre. Its daily press has long provided the morning papers for almost all of England and they are taken by many in Scotland and Wales. A journalistic strike force has been developed, which strangely illuminates the way British political life is exposed to extra-national forces though its peculiar inheritance of capitalist aristocrats and overseas finance. Astor, an American, bought The Times in 1922; Thompson, a Canadian, acquired it in 1966; Rupert Murdoch, an Australian, took it over in 1981. But Astor, educated at Oxford, became anglicized and conserved the paper's character. The hegemonic organ of the nation may have been in the hands of a foreigner financially, but it was edited by Old England all the more because of it. Thompson pretended only to business rather than political influence, but he too made the transition across the Atlantic to become a Lord.

His son, however, shifted himself and the company back to North'

¹⁰ But as Angus Calder points out, "When Britain "stood slone", she stood on the shoulders of several hundred million Asians' (Puples Wer, London 1971, p. 22.)

America, allowing a Catholic monetarist to lead the paper into the abyss of British labour relations and a year-long, futile closure. Now losing money heavily, The Times was sold to Murdoch, who already controlled the News of the World and the Sam. But he sojourns in New York rather than London. His papers endorsed the Falklands expedition with such a ludicrous enthusiasm that they managed to blemish vulgarity itself. But there remains a sense in which the relationship Churchill established with Beaverbrook came to be faintly echoed in Thatcher's reliance on Murdoch. The bombastic irrelevance of 'down under' helped Thatcher to storm the enfeebled ranks of gentry Conservatism, and gave her a major working-class daily in a new way. Yet the Saw's very lack of seriousness was a signal that the militarism of the Falklands War was bursting out of the carapace of Churchillism. The cardinal world issues adjudicated by Britain in the past could hardly be applied to taking on Argentina over 1,800 people in 1982. UP YOUR JUNTA', was one headline in the paper as it welcomed an initial British success. Was this the way to fight the scourge of fascism?

Ambiguous Victories

In 1940 Churchill was willing to do anything and everything for victory. Yet, as we have seen, the meaning of 'victory' became increasingly ambiguous in the course of the war. Churchill fought tooth and nail to defend the Empire, but in the end—to save British sovereignty itself—he formed and was a prisoner of a politics which accepted the liquidation of the Empire (except for a few residual outposts like the Falklands...). The 'regeneration' was sufficiently radical to concede decolonalization and the emergence of new states, yet it was not radical enough to adapt the British State to its reduced stature. Galvanized by total war, but, unlike continental Europe, spared the ultimate traumas of occupation and defeat—Britain survived the 1940s with its edifice intact. This fact has often been alluded to as a principal cause of the 'British disease'—the country's baffling postwar economic decline; by the same token, moreover, it distinguished Churchillism from Gaullism.

The contrast is illuminating. Gaullism was born of defeat at the same moment as Churchillism (May 1940) and was also personified by a right-wing militaristic figure of equivalent self-regard and confidence. But in the long run Gaullism has inspired a far more successful national 'renewal' and adaptation to the increasingly competitive environment. Was this not partially due to the paradoxical fact that the fall of France, by reducing the Third Republic to rubble, ultimately provided a convenient building site for institutional modernization? In Britain, by contrast, the institutions held firm—like St. Paul's defying the blitz—with corresponding penalties for this very durability. The most ingenious of Britain's defences against destructive change and forced modernization was the conserving innovation of the wartime collaboration between labour and capital. This relationship was the very core of Churchillism.

If Churchillism was born in May 1940, it had at least a twenty-year conception. Keith Middlemas has shown that state, capital and labour sought to harmonize relations in a protean, tripartite affair after the crisis of the First World War. In his view, 'crisis-avoidance' became the priority

after 1916 and has dominated British politics ever since. A significant degree of collaboration was achieved between the wars, often covertly, sometimes called 'Mondism' after the man who headed the cartel that became ICI. One of its key figures on the Labour side was Citrine who led the TUC; another was Bevin, whose direction of manpower was, as we have seen, the backbone of Labour's contribution to Churchillism. Thus wartime corporatism radically intensified and made explicit an already established relationship. In Middlemas's words, 1940 instituted a 'political contract' where previously there had been an unwritten economic one. ¹¹

It is not my purpose here to try and add further to the list of elements involved. In academic terms it can be said—and it is important to say—that the picture is incomplete. Yet even when the skeleton is fully enumerated we might still miss the unifying tissues. For Churchillism was essentially the political flesh of national life: its skin, muscle tonality and arthritis at the same time. Churchillism combined the contradictions of capital and the workforce, as well as the desires for political freedom with those of imperial grandeur. Furthermore, it wedded these two distinct sets of opposites into a single enveloping universe of demagogy. One moment when this intensified, will help to show that 'Churchillism' was not a momentary thing, born complete and fully armed from the jaws of defeat in 1940, but was itself a historical phenomenon.

Churchill's role was contested to some degree from both left and right after May 1940, in the House of Commons and outside, especially as military defeats continued. It was only in November 1942 that the protests against his leadership ebbed away. That month was in fact the turning point of the war in Europe. It saw the Red Army shift the scales at Stalingrad and begin the destruction of Hitler's forces. It was also the month that the Americans landed in North Africa. This opened a small 'second front' as far away as possible from the main theatre, but also signalled the arrival of the United States from across the Atlantic. The huge pincer movement that was to divide Europe between Moscow and Washington was underway, and it meant 'victory' for Britain as well.

Coincidentally, the Beveridge Report was published to massive acclaim at home. It held out the promise of full employment, a health service, adequate pensions and social benefits, at the end of the war. Not only was victory forthcoming, however hard the battles ahead, but the peace would be worth fighting for. Within two weeks of its publication in December 1942, a Gallup survey in the UK discovered that 19 out of 20 had heard of the Report and that 9 out of 10 thought that it should be accepted. 12

Yet it was none of these things that ensured the supremacy of Churchill. The combination of American power and Beveridge could reassure the

¹² Calder, p. 609

¹¹ Middlemas, p. 272. His thoughtful study is welcome for its serious theoretical approach and sustained mastery of the primary sources—a rare combination. Its limitation, perhaps, is that Middlemas does not concern himself with the independent role of the City and overseas interests in the extended crisis of the British polity. See also, Leo Panitch, 'Trade Unions and the Capitalist State', NER 125, January 1981, p. 27

liberals, the coincidence of Stalingrad and his Report seemed to confirm hopes on the left. But what mattered most, pathetically so, was the victory at El Alamein. Finally, after months of bungling and defeats in Egypt and Libya, a huge concerted effort by the Empire swung the battle against Rommel, who was massively outgunned. In comparison with the Russian front, the adventures in the North African desert were a small sideshow (even then the British had at one point begun to evacuate Carro). Yet for Churchill it was El Alamein that was the 'Hinge of Fate', 'Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat', he suggested as his conclusion to the campaign. 13 In so far as 'we' meant the Allies, it was not only wrong (Midway had given the Americans control over the Pacific six months before); it was also fortuitous, as it preceded the far greater Russian breakthrough at Stalingrad by only a fortnight. But of course, the 'we' also meant the British, as if the entire course of the conflagration had been determined by the UK and its Empire. As the war was being won, it seemed that Churchill's Britain was winning the war; El Alamein secured his position at home politically. The battle also received disproportionate coverage in the UK, and has continued to do so across four decades of war books. The number of pages dedicated to North Africa has been an index of the desert war's ideological role in preserving British face, not its actual contribution to the world conflict. In this respect the current Falklands fanfare is its descendent.

The contrast in the aspirations represented by the conjuncture of El Alamein and the Beveridge Report was never reconciled by Churchill whose passion for Grand Imperial Strategy blinded him to the upsurge of hope amongst millions of his fellow countrymen, who longed simply for health and security. He took 'strong exception' to the Report and refused to commit the Coalition to its implementation after the war, pointing out that the financial demands it might make could conflict with the costs of occupying enemy countries. 14 When a Commons' debate on the Report was finally held, the Cabinet's prevarication and crassness left it remarkably isolated. All Labour members (bar one) who were not actually in government jobs voted against the Coalition's social paralysis. This firmly associated the Labour Party with the prospects for a new future, one historian considers that its Commons' vote then was probably responsible for winning the 1945 election. 15 The debate over Beveridge also led to the formation of a Tory Reform Group that sought to reconcile the Conservatives to social change.

Labour Inherits Churchillism

Which brings us to the party aspect of Churchillism and its legacy: the alternating two-party 'system', once heralded as proof of Britain's attachment to democracy and now under attack from the SDP as the cause of its decline. Not without reason, for each blames the other for the cocoon the two spun together after 1940. The reformers gained the ascendancy within the Conservative Party as Churchill remained aloof. The result was that despite his dominating national role, it was really

¹³ Churchill, vol 4, p. 541

¹⁴ Bullock, p 226

¹⁵ Calder, pp 613-14.

Baldwin who was 'the architect of mid-century Conservatism' in attitude and spirit. ¹⁶ Yet Churchill's presence as leader of the opposition until 1951 and as Prime Minister again until 1955, prevented the overt expression of reformed Toryism from obtaining a positive, modern profile.

After his disastrous handling of the Beveridge Report, Churchill sensed the public swing away from him. In March 1943 he broadcast his own partial conversion to its principles and proposed a national coalition to continue into the postwar period. The Labour Party was unable to tolerate permanent institutionalization into a subordinate place, at least in such a naked form; it smacked too much of 1931. Rank-and-file militancy stiffened the resolve of the leaders to fight an election after the war. This opened the way for those merely sensible measures of nationalization undertaken by Labour after 1945 to be assailed as the most dreadful socialism by the Tory press. It has long been recognized that Labour's formative moment was not so much 1945 as 1940—Attlee was continuously in the Cabinet (first as Deputy Premier, then as Prime Minister) for over a decade. Labour, rather than the Tories, built the postwar consensus which was then atilized by the Conservatives. 17 To preserve this creative tension, with its invariable centrist bias, violent parliamentary attack was modulated with bipartisan understanding: Churchillism intensified and legitimized the operatics of pseudo-debate. And this was the price for so panoramic an incorporation.

Labour also inherited the full costs of Churchillism internationally. No sooner had Germany been defeated than the United States summarily severed Lend-Lease, making the abolition of the imperial preference system the precondition of any further financial aid. 'The American Loan' became the terrain of a major domestic and international battle over the financial and monetary autonomy of Labour reformism. With the installation of the coalition in May 1940, the old omnipotence of the Treasury over the national macroeconomy had been temporarily eclipsed—'in total war it was essential to plan resources first, leaving the financial side to be adjusted accordingly. 18 In 1945 stringent American conditions helped clear the path for the restoration of the Treasury's authority. Moreover, the immediate financial crisis in war-exhausted Britain—fueled by the continuing foreign exchange shortage and gigantic debts to the dominions—was exacerbated by commitments to a high rate of military expenditure. One year later, for example, Britain still retained a garrison of 100,000 troops in both Egypt and Palestine. Despite Attlee's flirtation with a withdrawal from the Middle East, Bevin and the Chiefs of Staff persuaded him otherwise. 19 Soon the relative costs of Britain's military budget would become a major factor in the slippage of its economic power. Internalizing the Churchillian delusion of the country's destiny in the 'Grand Scheme', the Attlee government and subsequent Labour governments paid on the installment plan the double costs of Churchillism: economic subordination to America and the projection of an independent world military role.

¹⁶ Martin Pugh, The Making of Modern British Politics, 1867–1939, Oxford 1982, p. 296.
¹⁷ Tom Naim, "The Crisis of the British State', NLR 132, November 1981, p. 40.

¹⁸ Addison, p 116

¹⁹ Henry Pelling, Britain and the Swand World War, London 1970, p 288

To sum up: Churchillism condemned to a slow death that which it saved from catastrophe. Its impulse was to preserve the Empire but Churchill was pragmatic enough to pay the costs of commitment to democracy—to 'self-determination abroad and social reforms at home—that were anathema to the bedrock of his views. His militancy against Nazism made him welcome to the left, and Labour was crucial in putting him into office: it sustained the war effort that he spoke for. Thus Churchillism opened the way for the Labour victory in 1945, the creation of the welfare state, the legislated independence of India and American domination. Thus British socialism made its compromise with the capitalist nation under the benediction of his cigar and 'V' sign. In turn, this crippled the modernizing, radical impulse of the social democrats and liberals who provided the brain power of the Labour Party in office. Equally, Labour's international independence was clipped by the Cold War, itself dramatically announced by Churchill's famous 'Iron Curtain' speech of March 1946, where, in front of Truman, he called for Anglo-American military co-operation to be formalized into an anti-Soviet alliance.

At this point it may be pertinent to return to the analogy with Gaullism. Churchillism, as I have tried to show, is not a class coherent ideology. Rather it is an ideological matrix within which contending groups are caught, none of them being the 'true' exemplar since each is in some way equally constitutive. (Thus Michael Foot was probably flabbergasted and bitter when Margaret Thatcher arrogated Churchill's mantle.) Gaullism, on the other hand, developed as an ideologically specific class force. It combatted Communist domination of the resistance movement and was not structurally penetrated by and indebted to the organized working class. This allowed the Gaullists a far greater confidence in their exercise of state power. Dirigisme and extensive nationalization were essential for the modernization of French capital, and under Gaullist colours the national could comfortably dominate over the social. The effect of Churchillism then has been not only to prevent the emergence of nationally hegemonic Brandt/Schmidt type of social democracy, but also to block the Right from creating a dynamic party of national capital.

Andrew Gamble has distinguished three main schools of explanation for Britain's decline, and notes that there are Marxist as well as bourgeois variants of each. Respectively, they are: (1) the uk's over-extended international involvement and military expenditure; (2) archaic institutions of government including the party system; (3) the 'overloading' of the state by welfare expenditures, compounded by the entrenched position of the unions. ²⁰ Each is partially true, but instead of arguing about which is the root cause of decline, we can note here that Churchillism fathered them all. Its rhetoric befogged the minds of opponents and successors alike. It ensured the preservation of the Parliamentary Nation and thus Westminster's allegiance to a moment of world greatness that was actually the moment when that greatness ceased. Churchill's National Coalition ensured an astonishing recuperation, one that left the patient structurally disabled for the future as it remained obsessed with its apparent resurrection from the dead.

²⁰ Andrew Gamble, Britain in Dudine, London 1981, pp 24-26

IV Thatcherism

On 3 July 1982, the Prime Minister spoke to her first major rally in the aftermath of the Falklands battle. Some 5,000 Conservative supporters gathered at Cheltenham racecourse, and Thatcher delivered one of the most remarkable speeches in recent British politics. She gave her interpretation of the True Meaning of the war in the South Atlantic. She announced that its 'spirit' would now be applied at home. The example of the task force was its professional leadership and its clear hierarchy of rank. 'Every man had his own task.' 'All were equally valuable—each was differently qualified.' This was a lesson not only for management—who should emulate the 'commanders in the field'—but also for the train drivers (then on strike) and the hospital ancillary workers engaged in industrial action. A lean, union-free, 'professional' economy led with martial élan was Margaret Thatcher's vision. For her it was more than a vision, the reality of it was already tangible.

Once, she said, there were some 'who thought that we could no longer do the great things which we once did'. Perhaps there were even some in that very Tory audience who had had 'secret fears... that Britain was no longer the nation that had built an Empire and ruled a quarter of the world. Well they were wrong. The lesson of the Falklands is that Britain has not changed.' Other people might have thought that this was precisely the problem: that the UK had not changed while the rest of the world had. The fainthearts! No, a veritable renaissance was under way: 'We have to see that the spirit of the South Atlantic—the real spirit of Britain—is kindled not only by war but can now be fired by peace... the spirit has stirred and the nation has begun to assert itself.'

Some days later, the polls registered Conservative party support running at close to 50% of the electorate with the rest divided between Labour and the Social Democrats, a combination which promised Thatcher a potential landslide.

Thatcher's South Atlantic programme may appear implausible. But the less such aspirations are taken seriously, the more likely they are to succeed. Thatcher's prospectus capped a significant expression of opinion that began during the war itself and which has emerged from it strengthened as well as self-confident. As early as 14 May, The Times, as we will see, thought the war had awoken the British people from their lethargy. On 5 April it had asserted that, 'the national will to defend itself has to be cherished and replenished'. A month later, satisfied that the 'will' had stirred, the paper insisted that it had to be fed with victory. Similarly, chiliastic imperialists like Sir Julian Amery saw the Falklands crisis as a moment of national renewal. Moral rearmament needs a real war, it seems. Speaking to the annual conference of the Scottish Conservatives at Perth, a week before the British landings, Thatcher herself felt 'this ancient country rising as one nation. . . . Too long

submerged, too often denigrated, too easily forgotten, the springs of pride in Britain flow again.' After the San Carlos bridgehead had been established, *The Economist* (29 May) took up the same theme:

If the coolly professional British forces now on East Falkland bring the Argentine forces in Port Darwin and Port Stanley to an early recognition that they are beaten, there will be a surge of self-confidence within the British nation which could have great and lasting effects

Leaving aside the multi-national complexity of the UK, what kind of nation is it that should need such a shot in the arm? Why should pushing a bullied, conscript army under the command of a notorious killer, from terrain few have desired to inhabit, be the source of 'great and lasting benefit? Who could wish for a 'great surge' from such an unnecessary event? -

There is both a recognition and a blindness to the somewhat fervid desires of *The Times* and *The Economist*, of Amery and Thatcher. They are justified in feeling that something is wantonly wrong in the UK. The country's economic achievement is well below its potential. But they are blind to the impediments that have created and reinforced the blockage. How could it be otherwise when they are themselves spokesmen and women of one aspect of the impediment itself? They can hardly be expected to admit that they are themselves part of the problem rather than the country's saviours. Of course, I am over-simplifying. It is not the individuals themselves who are responsible, even collectively in the House of Commons, so much as an inherited, preserved and still energetic institutional culture and economic orientation; one that impinges well beyond the political centre to the role of finance capital, the structure of industry, overseas investment and the labour movement.

Who Can Cure Britain?

It is difficult to explain this exactly without a full account of contemporary Britain. Despite the present recession and record unemployment, by no means everything has gone from bad to worse since 1945—there have been marked cultural and economic improvements. But the place of the British state in world affairs has rapidly diminished, just as its relative standard of living has fallen well behind its European neighbours. To take just one example of the un's global position: at the beginning of the century, Britain produced a third of the world's exports of manufactures. Towards the end of the 1930s, this had fallen to nearly a fifth but rose again after the war to reach 25% by 1950. In the 1970s, however, the figure fell below 10% with no prospect of recuperation. One might argue that for a country of 50 million to have 9% of the world's exports in manufactures is more than adequate. But to a political class unable to accept such a status, the decline of Britain's world position is a blow to its - 'natural' sovereignty, defined as it has to be in global terms. It therefore seeks a way of 'pulling' the country out of its decline without abandoning its own world pretensions. This is the sublimated attraction of the 'Dunkirk spirit' (a favorite of Harold Wilson's). A turnaround is sought in which all 'pull together', and the institutions are preserved.

The idea that there was nothing serious holding the country back was

captured in Wilson's election slogan of 1964: 'Let's Go With Labour'now beyond irony. But his modernism turned out to be a veil which hid from sight his attachment to the old. Wilsonism foretold a 'technological revolution'. The unmasked archaicism of much of British life made his costume seem especially attractive. Yet by emphasizing the frippenes of history. Wilson ensured that he could leave untouched the central institutions of a retrograde order. In particular, he sacrificed Labour's social programmes to ensure Britain met its financial 'obligations' overseas. He refused to devalue the pound and condemned his administration to years of exchange crises. So Wilson turned to trade-union legislation for political salvation. But he was unable to ensure Labour Party backing and had to abandon his proposals, revealingly entitled 'In Place of Strife'. The episode contributed to his electoral defeat in 1970 and with a strong supporting media, chorus helped to ensure the fetisbreation of the issue. Undoubtedly, embattled labour relations are a contributory factor in the un's economic demise, even if they originated in the first place from its backward capitalism. But, however important, they are not the root problem taken on their own. They were projected into a central symbol of the British crisis in the 1960s and 1970s with an intensity that spoke of displacement, and this fixation on the unions diverted attention from equally critical problems, thereby contributing to the general malaise.

When Heath replaced Wilson in 1970, his Government passed anti-union legislation and at the same time took Britain into the Common Market. Once more a 'magical' solution outside of the sovereign institutions themselves was conjured up to do the work of domestic transformation. Heath supposed that local industry would be redirected and invigorated by its European context, while liberated from the shackles of trade-union power. Instead he was driven from office in a shambles of domestic conflict brought to a head by the second miners' strike. The fundamental reason for Heath's defeat in February 1974 was that he had launched perhaps the most far-reaching assault on the Churchillist inheritance, without adequately explaining what he was doing (indeed, there may be no rhetoric currently available in British politics to articulate such a programme). At any rate, when he announced in 1970 'we were returned to office to change the course of the history of this nation—nothing less', Heath was hardly greeted with acclaim.

In the closing days of the February 1974 election, which Heath called to defeat the second national miners' strike, his campaign was hit by three blows: first, Enoch Powell, though saying he would die a-Tory, announced that he would vote Labour and called on others to do likewise, because at least the Labour Party promised a referendum on the EEC and thus the possibility of a British withdrawal from it. Second, the head of the Confederation of British Industry said that the Industrial Relations Act should be repealed—the capitalists themselves disliked Heath's rigid labour legislation. Meanwhile a record trade deficit of

² See my article, 'Heath, the Unions and the State', NLR, 77, January 1973.

¹-For a good condemnation of this see Ralph Miliband's postscript in *Parliamentary Securitism*, second edn, London 1972, pp. 361-4.

Martin Wiener, English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Sperit, 1870-1980, Cambridge 1981, p. 163

nearly £400 million in 1973 was announced, which undermined the credibility of Heath's economic transformation, made particularly painful by the year's 20% increase in food prices. Heath's failure was a decisive event and it opened the way to Thatcher as well as to the Wilson/Callaghan government whom she would replace. Both sought retrogressive solutions to a crisis which had been greatly exacerbated by Heath's domestic fiasco.

In contrast to Heath's 'abrasiveness', Wilson now openly presented himself as a social conservative. He repealed the labour legislation and introduced a Social Contract. This was an attempt to codify publicly the relationship between the state and the labour movement, so crucial to Churchillism. But his attempt to make the understanding explicit was the harbinger to its destruction. Deftly retiring from office, Wilson was succeeded by Callaghan who was obliged to accept a conditional IMF loan while monetarist policies were introduced by his Chancellor, Denis Healey. If Wilson's answer to the crisis was to blame the Tories for being disruptive and to reassert the neo-corporatist formula of 1940, Callaghan tried to finesse the debacle of the Social Contract by following the example of Macmillan after Suez. He manoeuvred with flair and presented the image of a man for whom nothing was really out of sorts. The problem with such a pose, of course, is that it needs a narcissistic media to appear convincing. Callaghan did not have this, and when significant numbers of the working class voted for Thatcher in 1979, they did so because they knew that something was wrong.

The Dash to War

So too did Margaret Thatcher and she campaigned on the need for measures to be taken. She offered 'change'. She saw the expanded role of the state and the 'relentless pursuit of equality' as the explanation of the British sickness, and promised an assault upon the 'progressive consensus' of the 1945 welfare state. 5 But while she has tried to cut back the role of the state in civil society (while increasing military expenditure), Thatcher nonetheless also considers it an essential part of her task that she should govern. 'Govern what?', one might ask, and the answer is to govern firmly. While Thatcher concurs that something is wrong, it is not the archaic nature of British sovereignty or the country's institutional traditions that she regards as being in need of transformation. Rather, she believes that they are not being exercised enough. Thatcher does not comprehend that Parliamentary rule needs to be reconstructed democratically, she thinks that it only needs to be applied with resolution and consistency for all to be well. What is missing is a lack of nerve and moral fibre, in her view. Thus she has, ironically, got closer to grasping that there is something wrong in 'the way' that Britain is governed, than those who simply blamed the unions, isolation from Europe, the role of sterling, etc. But Thatcher's solution—her gimmick—is that what is needed is 'real' British government. Her wing of the Tory party desires

⁴ T. F. Lindsay and Michael Harrington, *The Communitive Party*, 1918–1979, second edn, London 1979, p. 278.

⁵ Margaret Thatcher, 'Let Our Children Grow Tall', speech of 15 September 1975, in Selected Speeches, 1975–1977, London 1977, p. 9

what it regards as a 'return' to home-made leadership that bears the once formidable impress of quality, 'Made in Britain'.

Such an approach was to make sure that a great deal less was actually made in Britain. 1980 saw the greatest-ever one year decline in British output. Deindustrialization, a massive increase in unemployment, a surge in the export of capital, the regressive reform of taxation and decrease in real wage incomes—might all have some rationality in terms of the peculiar structure of British capitalism, one dominated by the City and multinationals. But the combination was hardly designed to ensure electoral popularity. Hence the miraculous advent of the Falklands for Thatcher.

During the South Atlantic crisis, another issue more plausibly vital to British sovereignty cast an ironic light on the ensuing military battle. It illuminated the way the Falklands served to divert attention from the realities of the British economy—a diversion Thatcher positively welcomed when she spoke at Perth. One of the conventions of the EEC's procedures which had reassured the British on entry in 1973 was the so-called Luxembourg compromise. This was understood to be a crucial safeguard which meant that no member state could have its vital interests over-ruled by a majority vote of the others. For Thatcher's Government this 'understanding' was used as a power of veto on Common Market business. In the midst of the Falklands crisis, the major EEC states adroitly shattered the British presumption and voted through agricultural price increases against Britain's protests. The country's self-defined sovereignty was decisively violated, as Europe decided Britain's food prices against its wishes. But already committed in the South Atlantic, Thatcher could not afford a struggle on two fronts. Asked in Parliament whether she 'would continue to want Britain to be a member of the EBC', Thatcher gave this reply: I am suggesting that we do not dash into any hurned conclusions before we have had time to think these things out'. The Falklands saved Thatcher from a conflict with the EEC, where all of the UK's economic weakness tells most damagingly.

Hence the dash to war in the South Atlantic. It can be argued that Thatcher was a prisoner of events (in that she might not have survived either a motion of censure or an enquiry if she had not gone to war), while in a larger sense Parliament's Churchillism thrust her into a demonstration of her 'Iron' capacities. Certainly she could not have successfully grabbed the mantle of Churchill single-handed, such a deed would have been fiercely contested by his other inheritors. But that said, she did not need time 'to think things out'; it was the kind of issue she had wanted all along. If Galtieri was obliged to gamble on an invasion for reasons of domestic politics—under imminent threat of a general strike and faced with outspoken opposition—then what was political necessity for him was a godsend to his British counterpart. And not merely because the Falklands were a spectacular diversion from the economic indices and the rise of the SDP. Equally important was the opportunity for a display of

⁷ Hansard, 20 May 1981, p. 470

⁶ Ajit Singh, ""Pull Employment Capitalism" and the Labour Party', The Socielist Register, 1981, p. 12, a vivid summary of Thatcher's havoc.

pure ideological fortitude. The nothingness of the islands gave Thatcher perfect scope for action. Not a part of Europe, not integral to the Cold War, not even of economic consequence—the Falklands were a perfect stage for the exercise of *Principla* because they were so utterly removed from the complications of substance. Here, at last, was a way of showing 'who governed' to general admiration, in an antipodean nowhere that could be isolated by hunter-killer submarines. Just as Mao said because the Chinese people were poor and blank, beautiful pictures could be drawn upon them; so the blankness of the Falklands allowed the 'lessons' of Thatcherism to be projected onto them with perfect clarity.

But if the pedagogy is designed for the general erudition of the British public, the point is being driven home against Thatcher's enemies in the Conservative Party more than anyone. The rise of Thatcherism signals an interesting mutation in the political direction of the main ruling-class party. Thatcher's sword may have cut leftwards only, but it has done so from a point so far on the right that its initial victims have been in the centre and top of the Tory Party itself.

Conviction Out of Her Own Mouth

Just before her election, Thatcher distinguished herself from her Labour opponents and Conservative predecessors thus: The not a consensus politician or a pragmatic politician, I'm a conviction politician.' The difference is more than one of style, and even that is important. The form of dominance she offers is novel not only in terms of government since 1945 but also vis à vis the Conservatives and the long hegemony of Baldwin. It is interesting to compare her to Churchill himself. The old warrior would have looked askance upon the evangelical grocer's daughter. Especially, perhaps, upon the way that she conducts war. Criticizing the American approach to international conflict, Churchill stated,

The British mind does not work quite in this way. We do not think that logic and clear-cut principles are necessarily the sole keys to what ought to be done in swiftly changing and indefinable situations. In war in particular, we assigned a larger importance to opportunism and improvisation, seeking rather to live and conquer in accordance with the unfolding event than to aspire to dominate it often by fundamental decisions ⁹

This is a wonderful description of Albion's perfidy by one of its master practitioners. Bluff, opportunism, the subordination of all principles to the national interest of the moment: Churchill was describing the pragmatic flexibility of force and fraud by which the Empire was made and which has confounded so many people around the world.

Thatcher, with her insistent emphasis on the governing principles of her foreign policy, is not exactly the true inheritor of Churchill's belligerency. But nor was Churchill werely what the Thatcherites would term a 'wet'. That aspect of his legacy in which pragmatism is all, was characteristically

⁸ Observer, 25 February 1979, as cated by Hugh Stephenson, Mrs Thatcher's First Year, London 1980

Winston Churchill, The Second World War, vol 3, London 1950, p 597

summed up by Macmillan: In the long run, and for the common good, the umpire is better than the duel.' (It was a justification for his 'soft' policy towards the unions.) While Macmillan took the pragmatic wing of the Conservative wartime policy to its logical conclusion, Thatcher has taken off on the other wing alone. How far will it fly?

When Thatcher gained the nominal leadership of the Conservatives in 1975, her front-bench was overwhelmingly hostile, having initially supported Heath. It took Thatcher two years even after she won the 1979 election, to bring the cabinet fully under her control and that took all her considerable skill and contempt. Her general attitude towards her senior colleagues is apparently summed up by her description of the cabinet as 'my blue bunnies'. 11 When there were signs of rebellion in the hutch, she moved promptly. The turning point came in September 1981. To understand its full drama, the history of the Heath years must be recalled. He had originally pledged to remove the state from day-to-day economic matters. But after his initial setbacks, he reversed to a more activist stance in what was dubbed his 'U-turn'. With Thatcher in office, the Left feared an immediate, savage assault on the working-class institutions which would outdo Heath's, while the media commentators waited with cynical smiles for her Heath-like return to more pragmatic and sensible policies after an initial brush with reality. Both groups were disconcerted. Whereas Heath had set out to renovate the traditional British patrician class in a European context and to reinforce its perspectives in a more intelligent globalism, Thatcher set out to replace the patrician class altogether, with their attachment to 'consensus' policies and social welfare. This, indeed, seems to have been her prime task, and so she cautiously backed away from union showdowns she might lose, in particular with the miners, without abandoning her objectives.

In the summer of 1981, the effects of economic deflation began to alarm the 'wets'. Lord Thomeycroft, Chairman of the Conservative Party, suggested that there should not be an Autumn reshuffle. This was seen as a move to protect the old guard's numerical majority in the Cabinet. Thatcher was apparently annoyed. In September 1981, Thomeycroft was removed as Party Chairman and replaced by one of her associates from the back-benches, Cecil Parkinson, educated at a state school. Lord Soames and Sir Ian Gilmour were dismissed. James Prior, who was the 'wet' Secretary of State for Employment, was shunted off to Northern Ireland—a graveyard of political careers—and replaced by another self-made Thatcherite, Norman Tebbitt, who began to draft anti-union laws. The Mail and the Express gloated over the fall of the 'grandees'. Thus, far from softening her policies in mid-term, Thatcher reinforced her original partisan direction. Gilmour said that she was steering the country straight onto the rocks (not a reference to the Falklands) and called for an amelioration of her relentless deflation. One commentator concluded: 'The old Tory establishment must know now, if it did not know before, that it faces ultimate liquidation at Thatcher's hands if she stays as Leader.'12

¹⁰ Keith Middlemas, Politics in Industrial Society, London 1979, p. 400.

¹¹ Anthony Sampson, The Changing Anatomy of Britain, London 1982.

¹² Andrew Gamble, 'Mrs Thatcher's Bunker: the Reshuffle and its Consequences', Marxism Today, November 1981, p. 10

The war in the South Atlantic may now have ensured Thatcher's predominance. Lord Carrington, the patrician Foreign Secretary, resigned after the Junta's take-over, to the delight of bellicose MPS. More important, Britain's ultimate victory appeared to vindicate Thatcher's adamantine, anti-consensus politics. A discernible shift to the right took place in the Conservative Party as a result of the war. Immediately after the surrender at Port Stanley, The Financial Times' political editor concluded, 'The Tory grandees are out or on their way out'. ¹³ The rightwards movement might well continue, and he noted ominously, 'The Prime Minister's views on law and order, for example, have yet to be given full expression'. A week later The Times agreed, 'The old guard have largely been routed'. ¹⁴

The Governess Takes Charge

If this is indeed the case, then the Falklands crisis will have made a historic contribution to Britain's domestic politics. In class terms, Thatcher represents the self-made, ideological believer in country and capitalism for whom exchange and the market have precedence over manufacture. Under her leadership, petty-bourgeois militancy has taken over from the old, semi-cultured, patrician elite. Has the governess now taken over from the squire? The question might seem an odd way to address the Falklands War for those who are not British. Yet within the ux it is a recognizable interpretation of the dispatch of the Armada. The 'whigs' may finally have succumbed. The country house has at last been captured. But it has not been stormed by an aroused rabble of gardeners, against whom it was well fortified. It has not been taken over by the disgruntled servants, who have always been closely policed. It has not been seized by a radicalized scion of the mansion who had the misfortune to be repelled by its inequality and attracted to theory. It has not even been overrun by the proletariat, who are kept a good distance away. Assault from all these likely quarters had been foreseen and was defused. Instead, the pillar of rectitude and narrow-mindedness, the governess whose loyalty had never been questioned, who naively believes in the whole thing and regards it as virtuous, has decided to run it herself.

Twenty years ago it was argued that the historic origins of the British crisis lay in the stultification of its bourgeois revolution by a capitalist aristocracy at once landed and schooled in world dominion. ¹⁵ There may be much in the argument that needs to be up-dated or corrected, certainly in so far as it presumed a model of 'proper' bourgeois revolution on the European mainland. It would be more accurate to say that capitalism is necessarily a system in which economic power does not rule directly. It therefore never finds a completely coherent, organic expression of its dominion in any country. The economic 'democracy' of capital, its necessary freedom to accumulate competitively, will always ensure that its institutions of legislation and of executive political power are independent of, as well as subordinate to, money. Nonetheless, the

¹³ Malcolm Rutherford, 16 June 1982

¹⁴ Julian Critchley, 21 June 1982

¹⁵ Perry Anderson, 'Origins of the Present Crisis', NLR 23, January 1964. For E. P. Thompson's disagreement, see "The Peculiarrities of the English', in *The Powerty of Theory*, London 1978.

central argument remains compelling. Historically dominated by financial capital located in the south, whose millionaires always outnumbered industrial barons, the British state was animated by those trained in an imperial rather than a domestic role, and in ledgers and fields rather than in factories. The result has been a marked absence of a recognizable bourgeois political class, in any dominant sense—at once practical, realistic and ves businesslike.

Thatcher's own intellectual guru, Sir Keith Joseph, recognized this, when he suggested that one source of Britain's economic problems was that it 'never had a capitalist ruling class or a stable bants bourgeoisis'. 16 But the Thatcherites themselves have hardly filled the gap. The contest between them and the 'wets' for the leadership of the Conservative Party and the nation will not resolve the structural weakness. It is a struggle between a supra-bourgeois and a sub-bourgeois stratum; between stricken patricians and over-confident arraistes. But it is important not to overemphasize this division, which stems only from a shift in the balance of power within the same class bloc. The squire may have been superannuated, to return to the metaphor, but he is still allowed to poke the embers from the comforts of his armchair. He has not been ejected, nor has the house been burnt down. In particular, Thatcherism has if anything invigorated the relationship with the City and its foreign investments. 17

A Problem of the Transition

It was not completely fortuitous that the Falklands should have suddenly precipitated a conflict between the Thatcherites and the wets. Surprisingly enough, the islands have been a matter in which the Prime Minister took a personal interest. The standard uninformed view at the beginning of the crisis (which I also shared) blamed the problem on the uninspired approach of the Foreign Office. Edward Pearce, a leader writer for The Daily Telegraph, put it as follows. All would have been well, and Argentina would not have dared an invasion, if Britain had made it plain that it would literally stick to its guns in the Falklands. On the other hand, 'Had we been ruthlessly soft instead of soft in the fair-minded and gentlemanly way we prefer, the Falklanders would have been told that time was up, grants for resettlement in New Zealand were available . . . '. However, as he imagined it, the Foreign Office tried to bluff. Its representatives talked about leaseback, were unstrident, and presumed that nationalist sentiments were a thing of the past, in their 'maddeningly unassailable way, which Thatcher is right to detest. The Foreign Office thus occupied 'the worst of all possible worlds'. 18 We now know that this explanation, which blames the 'wets' and sees Thatcher as coming to the rescue to salvage British pride, is wrong.

The Foreign Office in fact conducted a remarkably successful, long-term strategy across changing administrations to persuade the islanders to come to a modus vivendi with Argentina. Since 1968 relations with the

¹⁶ Cited by Wiener, p. 8.

¹⁷ See Tom Naim's postscript to the new edition of *The Breakup of Britans*, Verso, London 1981, pp 381-387.

18 'The Falklands Crisis', Escenter, June-July 1982.

mainland had improved deliberately. In 1980, Ridley (Eton and Balliol, but by no means a wet) argued that the time had come precisely to be tough with the islanders. But Thatcher over-ruled him (gave him a 'mauling'). 19. It appears that the did not want to 'lose' the islands and, if The Economist account is correct, her intervention frustrated exactly the kind of 'ruthless softness' Pearce suggests would have worked. Nonetheless, the British continued to negotiate with Argentina even when it was in fact doing so in bad faith. Carrington told the Lords on 3 April that negotiations with an Argentinian representative in New York on 27 February 1982, 'seemed to have reached agreement on a satisfactory basis for further negotiations'. A message had come from him to which Carrington was 'preparing a reply'. Could it have been that its composition was proving difficult? -

For it transpires that at the beginning of the month Thatcher personally signed a letter to a Tory activist to reassure her that the withdrawal of the Endurance from patrol off the Falklands would not place the islands at risk. Furthermore, she wrote, 'The wishes of the Falkland Islanders are paramount. The Government has no intention of entering into a solution to the dispute with Argentina which is not acceptable to the islanders and to Parliament.'20 Had this been so bluntly put to the Argentinian negotiators in New York, it seems most unlikely that they would have felt a satisfactory basis for further talks had been achieved. There seems, then, to have been a contradiction between the ux's actual and diplomatic positions, one due not to the wetness of the Foreign Office or to the toughness of Thatcher but to the imposition of latter on the former. This was then multiplied by a further twist. Two weeks before the invasion, Carrington asked for a submarine to be sent to the Falklands and a Cabinet committee chaired by Thatcher rejected the proposal, at least according to a report in The Observer. 21 Thatcher's determination to cut back on expenditure meant that she was unwilling to wield the stick, even though ber policy on the Falklands was intransigent. If this sequence of events is approximately accurate, it is not surprising that Thatcher fears the outcome of the Frank's inquiry, which is now investigating the circumstances of Argentina's invasion.

Indeed, she attempted to displace attention away from her own administration by proposing an inquiry into the previous twenty years. An angry intervention by Heath prevented this, when he attacked Thatcher for wanting to 'rummage' through his government's papers to keep the limelight away from her own. 22 Heath's outburst must also have been motivated by frustration. For he had earlier suggested that Argentina should be left 'a way out', only to be shouted down by Thatcherite Falkland warriors on the Conservative benches. Now that she had scored her victory, Heath's own prospects for an influential role as elder statesman in the Party seemed definitively blighted.

¹⁹ Economit, 19 June 1982, p. 42. Parliament also gave him a mauling; for an important account of the Falklands debate of 4 December 1980, see Michael Davie, Observer, 30 May

¹⁹⁸² 20 Standard, 25 June 1982, an embarrassing revelation.

²² Peter Kellner wrote a devastating column on British secrecy and the constitutional, or rather the non-constitutional issues posed, New Statement, 9 July 1982

The SDP, Which Alternative?

A phenomenon like Thatcherism is defined and shaped by those who oppose it in the present as much as by its relationship with the past. Thatcher seems to regard the Social Democrats under Roy Jenkins as her most dangerous opponents. It is they who seek to fulfil the task projected by Edward Heath: the SDP is that lost tribe of British politics, a bourgeois political party. The two-major planks of SDP policy, a genuine attachment to Europe (which none of the others share) and a commitment to proportional representation, are both signs of this. The latter especially, should it become reality, will break the grip of the first-past-the-post system of Parliamentary election, and thereby crack the hold of the present incumbents. Nonetheless, despite its assault on the 'old system', the SDP is ambivalent in its basic attitudes. Perhaps the most credible contender for power, it remains at one and the same time the most radical and the most conservative party.

The conservative element is obvious enough, in effect it seeks a coalition of the centre. In the 1950s, the word 'Butskellism' stood for the social and economic policies of two successive Labour and Conservative Chancellors, Gaitskell and Butler, each of whom sought to become, and nearly became, Prime Minister. The SDP seeks to put a Butskellite Premier finally into office. The majority of the SDP MPS (almost all of them defectors from the Labour benches) come from this stable and its opportunist variations. For them, the Party's slogan of 'breaking the mould' is merely a neat item of campaign rhetoric, a way of cashing in on the electorate's desire for the new, in order to preserve their parliamentary seats, the old fix-it consensus politics and Britain itself, from the influence of 'the extremists of left and right'. The shock of the Falklands crisis for this predominantly Parliamentary wing of the SDP was considerable. After a year of stunning by-election successes, in which at one point their support in the polls had touched 50% of the electorate, they lost two successive by-elections and their local election results were appalling: their apparently invincible record had been stymied by the mould itself breaking all records. How could a party which in alliance with the Liberals promised a new national consensus fare anything but badly when an all-party national consensus had hauled up the Union Jack?

Another wing of the SDP really does want radical change: it seeks a genuine modernization of Britain politically, its attachment to Europe is cultural as well as commercial. This tendency within the SDP offered the best mainstream criticism of the war. In The Financial Times (6 May), Samuel Brittain, a monetarist of SDP leaning, wrote a fine piece after the sinking of the Belgrano, titled 'Stop the Killing Straightaway'. The Gnardian's regular columnist Peter Jenkins was easily the most consistent and hard-hitting critic of the Armada and its effects on Britain's international and domestic politics, and condemned the enterprise from the outset. Anthony Sampson expressed cautious scepticism in Newswerk (7 June). The London Review of Books (which has endorsed the SDP) published Dalyell and also Raymond Williams against the war. It was significant, however, that the LRB had to turn to a Labour MP and a socialist writer, rather than to any of the SDP members in the House of Commons. There, the gung-ho Dr Owen was deemed to have had a

'good war' and to have emerged as a credible leader of the new party. He stood against Jenkins in the first leadership ballot and with significant press support gained a credible 40% of the vote.

Today there is talk of a possible early election in which Thatcher could cash in her gains over the Falklands. The future of the islands themselves could then become an issue between the Prime Minister and the SDP, and if her own position proves the more popular, Britain might become the prisoner of her Iron Will' internationally. The question is whether Argentina should have anything more to do with the Falklands, as if this were a matter for the ux alone to decide. At the beginning of June, as British troops were poised for their by then inevitable victory, Thatcher was pressed about American desires for a show of some 'magnanimity'. She bristled at the idea. Dismissing any future for Argentina on the islands, she declared that the islanders have been loyal to us, we must be loyal to them', and stated that anything less than this would mean 'treachery and betrayal of our own people'. At the same time a convenient new theme came into prominence from the 'front line' itself. Max Hastings of the Express group wrote (2 June), I think that the only outcome of the war which would cause great bitterness among those who are fighting is any peace that gives Argentina a share in governing the Falklands after we have won'. Thatcher's attitude, with its witch-hunting mentality, its innuendo, its lack of proportion and its presumption that she could define treason to her own liking, came under attack from Peter Jenkins. 23 Meanwhile in The Times (4 June), Roy Jenkins had insisted that 'a negotiated settlement is essential after victory . . . the fact is that we cannot guarantee both the long-term military security and economic viability of the Falklands'. One feels like saying, 'Now he tells us!'24 Jenkins was shrewd enough to meet the key arguments against Thatcher. British blood could not determine subsequent policy or 'British valour would become the enemy of British interest'. The phrase demonstrated fine literary craftsmanship and should be inscribed in the pocketbook of every soldier. He also proceeded to assail the born-again Churchillians of the Falklands episode. To suggest that it 'amounts to a national regeneration comparable to 1940 . . . shows a pathetic lack of proportion'. It was as if the debate was taking place across the globe, for Hastings filed a report four days later in which he quoted a colour-sergeant, If a place is worth dying for, it's got to be worth keeping'. His paper endorsed the attitude in an editorial: the Express (8 June) came out for a 'Fortress Falklands' under the UK's perpetual sovereignty.

On its own terms this argument will have a bearing on future relations with the United States, as Washington seeks to mend relations with Argentina that were damaged by its support for Thatcher in the Falklands. The domestic repercussions may be greater, however. In politics, especially in British politics today, nothing is certain. But Thatcher's unilateral arbitration of British destiny in the South Atlantic for her own political ends threatens to bring a new melody into the UK. Foreign issues have long played a crucial role in domestic affairs, since the battle over Irish Home Rule a century ago and beyond. Often these issues

²³ Guardien, 9 June 1982.

²⁴ Especially as Raymond Whitney posed exactly this problem in the 3 April debate

crystalize existing divisions and rebound onto the electorate at second hand. A good example of this was when Gaitskell imposed teeth and spectacle charges in April 1951 in a budget designed to meet expenditures entailed by British participation in the Korean war. Bevan resigned in protest and the Labour Party was split, which contributed to its electoral defeat later in the year. However, despite the role that such disputes over international relations have played, in electoral terms there has been a bi-partisan consensus on foreign policy since 1940, with the sole exception of Suez. From the American alliance to the Common Market, the nature of inter-party debate could be summed up by Eden's phrase about his attitude towards Bevin's conduct as Minister for Foreign Affairs after 1945: 'I would publically have agreed with him more, if I had not been anxious to embarrass him less.'²⁵

What if Thatcher challenges the other parties on their attitude towards the Falklands, as an election issue? For The Financial Times (16 June), a permanent garrison on the islands is a foolish 'grandiose, imperial gesture'. Likewise for Jenkins and the SDP. Yet neither the Social Democrats nor Labour will feel comfortable if Thatcher attempts to garner the imperial sentiments excited by her victory in the Falklands war. Not only has her resolution in the South Atlantic apparently confirmed her domination over the Conservative 'wets', it now threatens to polarize electoral politics through 1983. 'Little Englandism' was successfully stifled by the political operators at Westminster when such sentiments threatened to block entry into the Common Market. But now, 'Great Britainism' might be released by the Falklands in such a way that it cannot be rebottled. The subjects of the Crown have never been allowed to decide the geo-political destiny of the British Isles, but Thatcherism may be possed to break this ordinance, just as it appealed successfully over the heads of the 'grandees' to the ranks of Tory opinion.

Against the Liberation Task Force

The left will be especially tested if Parliamentary nationalism comes to the fore electorally. There is no need to stress the distinctiveness of Tony Benn. Himself a modernizing socialist radicalized by high Cabinet office, he has become the spokesman for a Labour rank and file who have also rejected the miseries of Labour policy in office. They desire a socialist programme at once committed and accountable. Although this has yet to gain any popular approval, Bennism originally had a different source of attraction. It spoke against the EEC. After 1970, Benn's resistance to British affiliation helped Labour to appear, during the Heath years, as the more 'national' of the two parties. Subsequently, the Bennite programme of economic nationalism, protective tariffs, exit from the EEC, made it a dangerous if still improbable national alternative. Now Thatcher has trumped the left on the national question, as she has run up the Union lack over monetarism, unemployment and the free export of capital. Those who warned that should Labour ever take the UK out of the EEC, it would lead to a triumph for the Right, seem to be vindicated.²⁶ The Tones have demonstrated that they can build a nationalist alliance across

²⁵ Quoted in Miliband, p. 303.

²⁶ For example, Tom Naim The Left Agenus Europe? NLR 75, Sept. 1972.

class, region and party, with virtuoso speed and panache. Just as Foot found his endorsement of the task force taken from him by Thatcher with a gusto he could never match, so Benn, or just as likely a Labour rightist like Peter Shore, would find themselves trumped by Powellism, should they begin to sever London's relations with Brussels.

The scenario may be implausible, but the argument is crucial. In a recent issue of Tribme (11 June) towards the end of the Falklands campaign, its editor explained why all socialists should join the Labour Party: 'The truth is that Labour has everything to gain from adopting a radical programme. For months every opinion poll has been telling us that public opinion is overwhelmingly hostile to the Common Market and the American bomb.' Note well, not the British bomb. The public's attitude is veritably isolationist. Thatcher has drawn on these same sentiments to garner support for her Falklands War. Indeed much of the Left lined up behind her, and if this company did not include the editor of Tribine who denounced the 'Falklands madness', nonetheless he has still not seen quite how large is the writing on the wall. Yet Benn's opposition to the Armada has given him a new profile. By discarding his greatest apparent asset—nationalism—the opportunism of much of his public image has been transformed into courage. By saying simply that the fleet should be turned back, without any argument as to the 'rightfulness' of its objectives, Benn seems to have come across as practical and understandable and no more unpopular. Finally the Left may have broken from its Churchillian impress.

Thatcherism Emerges

In the wake of her Falklands triumph and her stirring speeches in celebration of the 'spirit of the South Atlantic', Thatcher's politics have taken on a clearer and more definable outline. Her monetarism was always a bit of a puzzle because the Conservative party dislikes ideologists of any kind. How did she manage to appear unideological herself and avoid the Party's hostility in this regard, while remaining so attached to her 'principles'? The answer, we can now see, is that Thatcher is not an ideologist in the proper sense. She is not deeply wedded to new ideas or even old ones; her ideal has been to remain 'true' to the past and to its supposedly simple values. By firming up traditional Tory suspicion of theory, she has made an 'ideology' of the prejudice against ideology itself, in particular against the ideas of the wartime consensus. That is why her's, unlike Heath's, is aptly termed a 'pseudo-radicalism'. Thatcher's rejoicing in military victory as the beginning of the Great British renaissance reveals, then, an almost uncontrolled nostalgia, rather than any realistic commitment to 'cut the country's cloth to fit', to use the language she reserves for the working class.

The feebleness of her actual programme of renewal as it appears today is matched by the ruthlessness of her dedication to the destruction of many of the gains that have been made in Britain since the war, both economically and in the quality of life. Yet the double irrationality of Thatcherism should not lead us to presume that it will lack continued popularity. The failure of Churchillism to provide either a right-wing, a left-wing or a centrist formation capable of directing a sustained

modernization, has led to the rise of Thatcher. Her standpoint is the past's vision of the past. From it she has delivered her terrible rebuke to the failures of the present. Nonetheless, her strident judgements have addressed 'real problems, real and lived experiences, real contradictions'.27 Her 'authoritarian populism' strikes a chord, while Foot's Labour patriotism is ill-dressed and unconvincing. Although Thatcher's domestic policies have ensured a degree of social and economic fear amongst the working classes unequalled since 1945, she has also managed to address directly some of the aspirations and beliefs which the electorate hold. The Labour Party leaders, by contrast, seem so bowed down by their years of 'responsible' government, that while they may speak more 'sense', they give the impression that they address only the managers, civil servants and owners while having abandoned any attempt to win popular assent to their own programme. It does not follow that Labour cannot win an election in the future. Its leaders appear to be banking on a reprieve that comes from mass repugnance at the costs of Thatcher's policies. But whether or not this proves a successful calculation, it has been motivated in good part by the Labour leadership's inability and unwillingness to generate positive support-starting within its own party—for the policies and solutions it offers.

This brings us to the question of the 'rationality' of Thatcherism. To what extent are her policies intelligent ones for the British state and to what degree is she really the prisoner of its decline rather than the inspirer of its liberation? Alan Freeman, for example, has criticised Benn's rhetoric that the UK 18 becoming like a Third World country, a semi-developed colony of multi-national capitalism. On the contrary, Freeman asserts that Britain holds overseas assets of £84 billion. It remains the second greatest power in terms of global investment and has the West's second largest overseas military as well. The costs of these two commitments are the key cause of the British decline, in his view. 28 Yet they are also, it seems, the expression of its strength. Presumably the combination is a vicious one. As the decline continues, the relative influence of the military, the City and multinational interests grows vis à pss the domestic economy and society. That cherism could be seen as the expression of this tendency to reduce the British Isles themselves into a task force: its non-redundant population conscripted and its working industry requisitioned for the overseas adventures of its masters.

Yet there is something unconvincing about this picture. For the expanded role of the City as an international financial centre needs depoliticization more than anything. Switzerland is surely the model, and policies that threaten to politicize the role of the City run the risk of

²⁷ Stuart Hall, "The Great Moving Right Show", Marxim Teday, January 1979, a text of envisible foresight and judgement, written before Thatcher's election victory

²⁸ International, May—June 1982 this is a variant of Gamble's explanation No. 1, while Thatcher's own view is No. 3. Unfortunately in this essay on British political culture there is no space to consider the interests involved in the Falklands crisis, such as the powerful naval lobby. One example must suffice. In 1966 it was decided to phase out aircraft carriers, yet the Institute went into commission in 1980. Now its sale to Australia has been stopped because the 'need' for these carriers has been 'proved', by islands whose total population is much smaller than the compliment and ancillary staff of the ships themselves, see James Bellini, Rule Britannia, London 1982, pp. 184–188. On the more general and very important question of arms sales and the Falklands, Mary Kaldor, Gaurabas, 17 May 1982

undermining its international position, hence its unwillingness to impose too stringent sanctions upon Buenos Aires. In other words, the military over-extension of the British state, while it may share the same origins as the financial globalism of the City, could now be an impediment to the latter's interests.

The decline of Britain has two distinct aspects, in both of which the military question has played a role but of a very different order. The first aspect is the collapse of the un from its position as a leading world power to a position in the second rank. This actually took place during the Second World War and was part of the general subordination of Europe to the United States and the Soviet Union. It was fully revealed by the Suez crisis in which Moscow threatened to rocket bomb London while Washington used its financial leverage to impose a humiliating British withdrawal. The collapse of Britain from its position as a leading world power with a giant Empire was definitive and irreversible. It was not caused by internal failure so much as overwhelming, external change.

The other aspect of the British decline, is the fact that since 1951 the UK has become one of the weakest and least successful of the second rate powers'. This is the unnecessary side of the collapse. That Britain would cease to be a global power was inevitable. But that it had to become an economic cripple was not. The rational task of modernization in Britain, then, is to make the UK a relatively thriving but nonetheless second-rank country. The reality of Britain's position in the world needs to be embraced politically, rather than denied or defied, for any significant turnaround that would allow its people to achieve, say, the standard of living in Holland.

In Chapter III, I wrote that when the MPS debated the Falklands on 3 April, they looked at the South Atlantic through the eyes of Churchill and believed that they too 'would put the Great back into Britain'. I thought about this phrase, and discussed it with others. Was it not too cheap a shot and too glib a description? Perhaps I was pushing my case too far, and thus weakening its impact. Then, on the evening of the victory at Port Stanley, Thatcher emerged from No 10 to say, 'Today has put the Great back into Britain'. Later, as we have seen, she claimed in her Cheltenham speech that Britain is still the country that once ruled a quarter of the globe. Thus while Thatcher has overseen an acceleration in the relative decline of the UK compared to other second level powers, she has asserted a Churchillian renaissance that has wonderfully transported the country back into becoming a world power once again.

Her attitude is only an extreme version of the mind-set that has held all British politicians in its grip since 1945. For if the crippling aspect of Churchillism were to be summed up in one sentence, it might be that British politicians have only been able to articulate a programme for the reform of Britain's industrial economy in terms of reasserting the nation's world greatness. A month after he became Prime Minister in 1964, Harold Wilson told the City of London Lord Mayor's banquet, 'we are a world power, and a world influence, or we are nothing'. 30 He was

²⁹ See Paul Kennedy's very helpful survey, The Realities Behend Diplomesty, London 1981, p. 182

¹⁸² 50 *The Times*, 17 November 1964

arguing against racialism in the Midlands, but the sentiment illuminated an all-party feeling. To become merely a northern European country with a per capita income of others is too paltry an ambition. It might mean a doubling of the national product, but in terms of Britishness it is treason.

The self-punishing ambition has been particularly expressed in terms of excessive military expenditure. Today the British habit of mocking soldiers has turned sour. The celebration of coercion which accompanied the Falklands Armada shows every sign of returning to the United Kingdom. It is a theme that Thatcher sought from the beginning of her leadership of the Conservative Party. The 'Iron Lady' initially addressed her ferrous gaze eastwards in the direction of the bear. She was presumably mortified when few took this seriously. Now she has gained the belligerent nationalist colours that her policies always needed to appear to succeed. For behind the hardness of Thatcher's approach there is a commitment to the market rather than production. She is not concerned about getting the country to work, rather she wants its services to work well. Rules, not output are what she is attached to, and ultimately the possibility of positive regimentation lies behind such a perspective. Militarization might well become domesticated in a way that has been missing from Britain hitherto. Soldiers have always paraded in central London, but in colourful uniforms and as a tourist attraction rather than a warning to the population. For a decade in Ireland, the forces have had an altogether more ominous and unattractive role. Now, the military may be projected as one of the few agencies who can 'get things done'. The reference to the 'coolly professional British forces' in The Economist is a possible warning. What if the Falklands fail to give the nation its needed 'surge' of self-confidence? What if the country is so churlish and ungrateful not to work hard enough? Might not this be construed as a betraval of those who have sacrificed their lives for the British way of life? Perhaps a bit of that cool professionalism will have to be applied at home, to 'liberate' the mainland itself from the legacy of the 'progressive consensus' Thatcher denounced in 1975 . . . Whatever one might think of that possibility, there can be little doubt that Thatcher's form of Churchillism has been to turn against its social legacy the name of Churchill himself. The more she succeeds, the more all other tendencies in British political life will have to undertake their own reckoning with the past.

Margaret Thatcher granted a special interview to the Daily Express on 26 July. 'It was understood right from the outset that the honour of our people and our country was at stake', she said about the Falklands. Success there has 'boosted Britain in the international world colossally'. As for the Conservative Party it shows that what is needed is 'not consensus, not compromise, but conviction, action, persistence, until the job is well and truly finished.' And economic recovery? The Prime Minister said, 'We are looking for self-starters. We are looking for princes of industry, people who have fantastic ability to build things and create jobs'. The unrealism of Thatcherism may be most perfectly expressed in this sentiment, one which rejects the state-led investment of Gaullism. Instead, we are offered an authoritarian populism, a celebrant militarism, a pitiful nostalgia, the export of capital, fewer jobs for lower wages, non-existent 'princes of industry', and, oh yes, the Falklands.

V A War in the Third World

In the beginning many spectators around the world were convinced that it was all opera bouffer gauchos and Brits in bowler hats snarling at one another and rattling a few sabres, before being led off to the conference table by their common American master. Instead, there was a short war which has rattled a good many preconceptions about contemporary world politics. It has certainly shaken the conventional wisdom that European 'imperialism' is a dead letter as well as the notion that the superpowers effectively 'control' all the military actions of their subordinates. Just as important, the Falklands conflict has also lifted a window on the political causes of war in the Third World through which we must briefly look.

There are two respects in which Galtieri's invasion bears remarkable parallels with other acts of aggression in the past few years. The Junta's seizure of the Falklands stemmed from growing public opposition to its tyranny at home. It was a blatant attempt—three days before a threatened general strike of Argentina's still powerful unions—to quiet opposition and secure a cheap popular triumph. Indeed the initial, easy successes were immediately presented as a nationalist legitimation of the military's control of government (although most of the population apparently saw this manœuvre for what it was). Thus the first and most imperative reason for the Junta's impetuous action was its need to defuse internal tensions and boost its own collapsing support.

But there was a second, and more calculated, reason as well. The defeat of the token British garrison at Port Stanley was intended to symbolize Argentina's new prowess as a regional power. The decision to take the islands by force was meant to add credibility to Argentinian claims on the Antarctic as well as to intimidate its traditional rival, Chile The Junta, victim of its own bombastic ideology, tried to counter domestic economic collapse with the escalation of Argentina's military pretensions. To this extent the invasion of the Falklands was a reflex of the same babris which had led the Junta to despatch 'advisers' to Central America to fight there as proxy Yanquis. Internal control and military expansionism—the Junta's real raison d'être for invading the Falklands had nothing to do with the sentiment of Argentina's population about sovereignty over the Malvinas. On the contrary, the invasion was an attempt to exploit the reasonableness of the country's claim so as to mobilize the issue for the other, utterly ignoble aims.

The best riposte to the Junta came from the 'Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo'. Since 14 May 1978, every Thursday, their heads in white scarves, the mothers of those who have disappeared—presumed kidnapped and murdered by the regime—stand in Buenos Aires's 'Place of May'. They have done so every week since then, whatever the weather and the harassment; organized by the solidarity of common bereavement. They

are the living indictment of the Junta and its associated killers such as Menendez, the commander of the Argentine garrison in the Falklands and the other thugs who came to power through making war against their own people. After the invasion, the mothers wrote on the placards placed around their necks as they stood in vigilance, 'The Malvinas belong to Argentina and so do the disappeared ones'

This eloquent and moving symbol of resistance to the Junta is a reminder of the unpopular aspect to the capture of the Falklands. In a fully anti-colonial struggle such as the many we have witnessed since 1945, the armies which meet each other in combat are quite different in kind. A people's army and a colonial army may recruit from the same population. But one is already the arm of a state power, the other seeks to become the creator of a new state power. The essence of such a liberation struggle is the expression of this inequality. Its success depends upon the nationalist forces being able to make a sufficient strength out of their own conventional weakness and a sufficient liability of their opponent's conventional power, to overwhelm him in a political victory born of passage of arms. The conflict in the Falklands had none of this difference. It was a war between two conventional states both of which attempted, through the battle of wills and weapons, to consolidate their unpopular regimes at home.

In so far as there is a familiar pattern to the colonial aspect of the Falklands confrontation, it dates back to the early nineteenth century. Then many wars took place between European states and already existing recognized states in what is now termed the 'Third World'—including a unsuccessful British siege of Buenos Aires in 1808. After the completion of colonial expansion, its consolidation and world wars, came the period of decolonization and the emergence of successful (because technologically and politically modern) resistance from within the imperial holdings, of France, Britain and Portugal especially. Today, the Argentinian attack on the Falklands, like the Indian takeover of Goa in 1961 or the Indonesian takeover of East Timor in 1976, is a sign that the boot is on the other foot. It is the turn of the once dominated to expand. And despite their protestations of self-justification, there clearly is an element of colonialization to such moves.

A Rash of Sudden Wars

Argentinian expansion is not imperialist, however; its ambition is limited to contiguous territory rather than any global reach. Recently, somewhat similar attempts by Third World states to expand their territorial dimension through war have occurred. In particular, since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, there have been the Khmer Rouge attacks on Vietnam itself (from April 1977), the Somali attack on Ethiopia's Ogaden (July 1977), the Ugandan attack on Tanzania (November 1978) and the Iraqi invasion of Iran (October 1980). All four bear some parallels with each other and provide a comparative basis for defining the contemporary nature of the Argentine Junta's behaviour in seizing the Falklands. Of course, they are far from identical; it would be facile to seek some formula to which they could all be reduced. In each case the value of the contrast is that it helps to highlight the unique, indigenous and specific aspects of

each conflict by allowing the common backdrop to be seen more clearly. But the background itself is also interesting.

If we tabulate each set of protagonists by smaller and larger country, the following common elements can be identified:

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Cambodia (Pol Pot) vs Vietnam (Le Duan's Polithureau)

Somalia (Said Barre) vs Etbiopia (Mariam Mengistu)

Uganda (Idi Amin) vs Tanzania (Julius Nyerere)

Iraq (Saddam Hussein) vs Iran (Ayatollah Khomeini)
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In each case the smaller country initiated hostilities against the larger one. In each, the smaller country was led by a harsh dictatorship which based its rule on terror, and continues to do so in the cases of Somalia and Iraq. The nature of the regime in the smaller state was also relatively and qualitatively more terroristic and dictatorial than that in the society it attacked. It is not that Vietnam, Ethiopia, Tanzania or Iran today are democracies, they are not. But their respective regimes are the product of an authentic revolutionary mobilization, and the leaders of all the four larger states listed here have a national record and a base of support within the population that accords them 'legitimacy'. By contrast, those of the left hand side of the table, the smaller and more bellicose regimes. have been the product of rigid family dictatorships. Torture, massive terror, the disappearance of thousands, the cult of the personality and even the overt acknowledgement of such barbarism, rather than popular movements have marked these states. There can be little doubt that the internal instability generated by such rule determined their attempts at military adventure. This is not to say that the four larger states are unfamiliar with violent state repression or are 'innocents' in the tensions that arose between the neighbouring pairs. In each case the dispute had a history on both sides and the smaller state had reason to fear the pressure and influence of the larger. The response however was reckless rather than cautious.

It is not difficult to see that the impetus of the Galtieri Junta, with tens of thousands of victims behind it, shares some of the characteristics of the other four aggressors. In each case, it should be added, a justifiable claim could be made out for the action taken. Probably the majority of the population in Cambodia, Somalia, Uganda and Iraq thought that the territory their army entered was theirs for reasons of history. This should warn us against any simple agreement with the passions of the Argentinians for the Malvinas. But whatever the rights and wrongs of the disputes, in all five cases a militaristic dictatorship took unilateral military action against a more powerful and somewhat more democratic, or at least a more rooted, regime.

The analogy seems to end at this point because, while Britain might be a more democratic state at present than Argentina, it is not a Third World country nor a recent site of revolutionary mobilization. Far from the war between Buenos Aires and London being a conflict between newly

¹ The schema is sufficiently broad to absorb the fact that Somalia has seen much less terror than Ethiopia, for the main point is that the latter country has undergone a more profound social transformation

independent societies, it is between the ancient colonial regime—Britain—which historically dominated, even if it did not absolutely rule, its one time protégé Argentina. The war over the Falklands is a North/South clash, not a South/South one like the four just enumerated.

The Galtieri Junta, however, had not intended to tangle with the British militarily. They believed that no such response would be forthcoming. Argentina's military was certainly under the impression that the United States would either lean towards it in the conflict or remain strictly neutral, in either case this would have made it impossible for Britain to mount a credible military reaction. One remarkable set of evidence for the casual assumption of a peaceful takeover by the Junta is the amount of military equipment they had on order but still undelivered. Had they waited a year, they would have had twice as many French 'Super Etendards' with many more 'Exocet' missiles; a perhaps decisively larger number of German submarines would also have been at their disposal. Argentina's Air Force had not even acquired the extra fuel tanks for its 'Skyhawks' which would have given them time for more than a single pass over the islands. At the same time, Britain had disclosed plans to run down its surface navy. By 1984 London might not have been able to send an Armada. In addition the absence of serious preparations for a British landing, even after the Armada set out, shows that Argentina thought the idea of a war farcical rather than inevitable. Alas, it is one of the signs of truly irrational behaviour to presume the rational response of others.

But while the Junta had not considered the feelings of the British Parliament when it ordered the conquest of the Malvinas, it was aware of possible repercussions in Latin American capitals. Argentina was too weak to risk a war with Brazil. It had a pretext to fight Chile over some tiny islands, but Catholic opinion and us diplomacy had prevented it from doing so, while such a war might be drawn out and expensive. Yet the Junta desired to show the rest of Latin America that Argentina had recovered from the traumas of domestic strife since the death of Peron. The reappropriation of the Falklands seems to have been chosen as a symbolic substitute. Argentinian prowess would be demonstrated by pecking the tail of the mangey lion. It was not the lion itself they wished to brave. Rather they wanted to crow over the menagerie that strut in the other presidential palaces and barracks of their unhappy sub-continent. The Junta's aggression was of the South/South kind, in that its prime motivation was as a display aimed to impress its neighbours. It was displaced onto a bleak archipelago; one that happened to be the nominal possession of an erstwhile capital of Empire whose leadership was suffering from acute withdrawal pains.

An Autonomous Logic of War

What are the reasons for the wars of the Third World that have just been enumerated? They are by no means the only armed conflicts in the world's 'South' that have been or are taking place in our time. But they demonstrate a degree of independence from the postwar geopolitical order. At the same time they reproduce it in new ways. There are at least

² New York Times, 2 May 1982, Guardien, 1 June 1982.

three reasons for such wars, the first of which—the arms trade—clearly imposes a new kind of dependency between 'North' and 'South', inherited from the old, more direct forms of hegemony.

- (1) Much has been written about the export of high-technology military equipment from the armament centres of the great and once great powers. All the four wars listed above were fought with weapons manufactured in other countries, whether from the Western or Soviet blocs. In none of the conflicts was either one of the pairs of combatants capable of manufacturing the major weapon systems they deployed. These were indeed wars seeded and nurtured from outside. The terms by which the arms deals were transacted could differ. Sometimes the weaponry was acquired on credit, sometimes as outright aid, sometimes as in the Iraq-Iran war it was mostly acquired for cash—which gave the belligerents a significantly greater degree of political autonomy. But however they were obtained financially, the fact remains that without the external supply the conflicts could not have taken place in the way they did. The shipment of weapons from North America, Europe, the Soviet bloc and China has proved to be the precondition for a rash of terrible small wars. Furthermore, there is a systemic logic to the transfer of armaments in this fashion, in addition to the political decisions which dominate the trade. Once one neighbour has modern weapons, then the other 'needs' to acquire them for self-defence. As each successful war leads to a victory and defeat, so the example of the fate of the vanquished and the new conquests of the victor motivate their surrounding neighbours to further purchases.
- (2) At the same time as many Third World countries have become dependent upon outside sources for their arms, they have also begun to demonstrate a degree of independence backed by their new military capacities. Argentina is only one example of this trend, whereby weapons bought from a number of suppliers have ensured an absolute dependency on none. But even when there is a single supplier of arms from outside, the recipient can strike further than the donor might desire. China probably did not want Pol Pot to persist in being quite so reckless. The Soviet Union assured Ethiopia that Somalia would not attack the Ogaden with its Russian supplied army. Autonomy can increase even when the means of destruction are only imported.

Perhaps the most remarkable sign of this has been the war between Iraq and Iran. While most of the world's attention has been concentrated upon the spectacular confrontation in the South Atlantic, the battle for Khorramshahr proceeded. It may prove one of the decisive military turning points of the decide, as tens of thousands of troops battled each other along the fault lines of Arab and Persian, Sunni and Shi'ite within the Islamic world. The Iranian victory, paving the way for a counter-invasion of Iraq, has shifted the balance of power within the Middle East and thus the world's chief oil exporting region; it will also have a profound effect on the geo-political position of the Soviet Union, which borders Iran and is fighting inside Afghanistan to its east. What is perhaps most unusual about the Iraq-Iran war, given its importance, is that neither side has the support of the United States in any direct fashion. Indeed, both are clearly independent of the two great powers, rather than

dependent upon either one of them, despite the fact that their forces were originally created thanks to Washington and Moscow.

(3) There is a third aspect to the conflicts between developing states in addition to the arms trade that makes them possible militarily (in the form that they have taken) and the increase in political independence as the West's singular domination has ended. This is the way in which the burden of a top-heavy, 'modernized' state machine is socially unstable. Incapable of leading their socially divided backward economies to a stable capitalist democracy; unwilling to open the way to a drastic socialization of the economy; unable to arouse the kind of popularity a properly fascist state can mobilize; trapped by the tremendous economic, political and cultural pressures of the rest of the world, which bear down on an inevitably proud 'new' country with terrific force—many of these regimes turn to militarization and terror. The arms provide the means; political independence provides the opportunity. The unstable military dictatorship which may result provides the impetus, as it seeks to preserve itself by exploiting the combination of means and opportunity to strike outside its borders.

Is America Losing Control?

Wars initiated by a Third World state that attacks across its defined border are only one variant amongst a constant rash of conflicts that may be observed in almost all the world's regions. As the British threw their ring around Port Stanley, N'jamana fell to a rebel army in Chad (in effect the result of Colonel Gaddafi withdrawing Libyan forces from the country) while Israeli forces bombed and shelled Beirut. A major Soviet offensive was taking place in Afghanistan. The Pol Pot forces had suffered severely from a Vietnamese campaign in their Thai-supplied bases inside Cambodia. The whole balance of force in the Middle East was threatened by the Iranian victory. Meanwhile the efforts of the Polisario in the Western Sahara and, possibly most important of all, the struggle in El Salvador, continued. We should not forget to mention the consolidation of Indonesian supremacy in East Timor, which it is forcibly incorporating into its territory after the most clear-cut case of genocide in recent times. A genocide armed and in practical terms supported by the same Anglo-Saxon countries which fought for the 'self-determination' of the Kelpers: Britain, the usa, Australia. At least 200,000 civilians out of less than one million were starved to death in East Timor.³

To bring such divergent terrors into a single global canvas would be beyond the unifying imagination of a contemporary Goya. But we can imagine that each of the local belligerencies may be fed into a Pentagon computor, its specificity coded in terms of American interests. It will not be difficult to guess the cumulative result: these things get out of the West's control. Somehow, therefore, the capacity of the United States to impose its will through the technological might and co-ordinated skill of its men needs to be reinstated after Vietnam. Politically, the Falklands crisis seems to reinforce a legalistic ideology that counters America from

³ Not to mention all the Third World conflicts of the recent past—the wars of the Indian sub-continent, the fighting around the periphery of China, the Israeli wars in the Middle East .

imposing its own wishes through armed expeditions. But the actual example of the British Armada could be different. It has 'shown' the world what the West can do through its intimidating example. One of the consequences of the Falklands expedition could be that it has so ruised the force level of the West's response to 'misdemeanors', that subsequently it will appear quite mild if America sends just a few planes to El Salvador Thatcher may thus have helped to solve the crucial problem of successive American administrations since 1975, by making it acceptable once again to intervene abroad directly. Almost certainly the enthusiasm for co-operation with the British that the Pentagon has displayed stems from this possibility. As far as Britain is concerned, then, the Falklands conflict represents a novel escalation which does bear a resemblance, however miniature, to the us war in Vietnam.

The war between Britain and Argentina over the Falklands is a peculiar combination of different types of conflict. So far as Argentina is concerned, it can be seen as an example of a Third World war, of the sort described. So far as the UK is concerned it is in part a colonial 'war of defence' and also a post-colonial war of intervention. For both countries it is a frontier dispute which has come about because of the virtually uninhabitable nature of the Falklands. More than large enough to house a community, but not fertile enough to be the basis for an autonomously viable community that could become independent in its own right (a factor that will be discussed in the next chapter), the Falklands-Malvinas remained an eccentric spot, subject to overlapping claims. If one looks at any atlas of frontier disputes one sees a world covered with the rash of contention. The only region which appears to have settled its borders is Europe, where there are more frontiers to the square mile than any equivalent zone. Yet more blood has probably been lost to resolve the placement of these boundaries than anywhere else. Millions have been killed to reach 'agreement' about its various sovereignties we now see delimited in our atlases and car-maps. Furthermore, in many cases it was Europeans who drew up the borders that are now subject to contention in other continents. While wars are endemic to human society to date, the modern pattern of aggressive international nation-state formation is European in origin. The new wars between developing countries may be seen as one of Europe's gifts to the world, as armour and infantry are launched in surprise attack. Europe was not the first to cultivate the art of war in ancient times: but it pioneered its industrial application. Now the underdeveloped world is 'catching up', as its members seek their own national 'definition'. By holding on to the Falklands, the British government found itself entangled by just such a development and was drawn into a Third World war.

VI A Just Settlement?

On 14 May The Times warned against any compromise solution. The Peruvian peace initiative was, in its view, a close call, as its terms came near to betrayal. The task force was off the Falklands and it was necessary to press on; not least because 'This crisis has shaken the British people out of a sleep, and the people, once woken, will not lightly forgive those leaders who rang the alarm and then failed to fulfil their responsibility...' It would be more accurate to say that the British public had been caught napping. Will future historians really look back to April 1982 and see a people waking from a long sleep? Will they judge The Times to have provided notable guidance? Or will they see it as a 'top' sleepwalker distressed by the daylight?

Whatever the answer, the British 'tradition' of judicious intelligence showed little vitality through the crisis, while the propagandists for war had a field day and not just in the House of Commons. The greatest advantage of the Right and the war party was their quickness of reflex, not least as they moved in on concepts such as 'sovereignty', the right to self-determination', the sanctity of the British 'way of life', and the imperative that 'aggression should not pay'.

The Times editorial which asserted that the British people were now woken and determined not to retreat, was designed to muster support for the feature article on its facing opinion page by Enoch Powell. He was jubilant:

All of a sudden, thoughts and emotions which for years have been scouted or ridiculed are alive and unashamed. In both universities [a revealing phrase], where, until recently, anyone who mentioned 'sovereignty' or 'the nation' or 'the British People' would have been lucky not to have been rabbled, students discuss with respect and approval arguments and propositions which presuppose those very things.

It is noteworthy that a man who thinks there are only two universities in Britain worthy of mention, should regard himself as a spokesman for 'the British people'. But not all of his account is false, however slanted and triumphalist. Words like 'sovereignty' did indeed go virtually uncontested, as they were usurped by Powell and his kindred spirits.

The Left's response tended instead to dwell on the *byportry* of Tories who suddenly took it upon themselves to denounce the 'Fascist Junta' in Buenos Aires. It needs little exercise of the imagination to hear those same Tory voices a few months previously expressing a very different sentiment, in response to complaints that they should not arm a regime like Argentina's, which had 'disappeared' so many of its citizens. (Tagree that it has been awful for lefties and people like that Jewish fellow Timerman, but you know, old chap, there are plenty of us Brits out there,

and a pretty thriving Anglo-American community, and they don't complain, far from it.')

Indeed, it was a simple matter to prove beyond question the hypocrisy of the House of Commons as it waxed indignant about the right to self-determination of the Kelpers. Both Labour and Conservative governments had, in succession, approved the wholesale removal of an equivalent island population from their remote homeland of Diego Garcia, lock, stock and barrel, and quite against their wishes. In 1966 there was an Anglo-American military agreement to make this Indian Ocean coral atoll available as a us military outpost. The island is much smaller than the barren Falklands archipelago, but its tropical setting makes it far more advantageous for settlement and self-subsistence. Yet there was deemed to be no room for its inhabitants once it became an Anglo-Saxon staging post in the cold war. So they were forcibly deported to Mauritius over a thousand miles away, and dumped in poverty for more than a decade until the final adjudication—tronically coincident with the beginning of the Falklands crisis—awarded them a mere f.4 million for their confiscated home. The size of the indigenous communities involved in both cases is almost the same: 1,200 deportees from Diego Garcia; 1,300 native-born resident Falklanders. Could it be any more obvious, therefore, that the bi-partisan attachment in the Commons to the principle of self-determination for small island communities does not exist, or at the very least, is racially selective?

In allowing the eviction of the Diego Garcians (to eventually make way for us Marines) Parliament undoubtedly committed an action worse, both in principle and practical impact, than the Argentinian seizure of the Falklands. It may not be a formal act of aggression to remove one's 'own' island people from their homes, but as a unilateral act of force against people it clearly overshadows the behaviour of Argentina in the Falklands, where the invaders killed nobody and apparently tried to ensure at first that life went on more or less as before.

If we simply desire to score points, the House of Commons would lose, were it not that it has better access to the press and television. But is not such argument a diversion anyway? In terms of ya-boo, custard-pie politics, we can show that the parliamentarians are hypocrites. What is new? Such noises are in fact the stuff of Parliament itself and the whole British 'debating' tradition, with its empty sounds. Party leaders seek to have it all ways, and do so: that is what their politics is about. Just to expose their double standards and leave it at that will impale us if we havesome genuine attachment to the concerns involved. Politicians can manipulate talk about 'rights' and 'principles' as they have a light touch and slippery fingers. Those who desire to mean what they say, on the other hand, can handle such terms only with care and difficulty. Hence the awkwardness when we are confronted by Thatcherite appeals to international standards. She may be a hypocrite but we cannot easily evade the issues without appearing shabby and underhand. If it was wrong to expel the Diego Garcians for example, it must also be wrong to surrender the Kelpers unprotected to the Junta.

¹ See Nigel Williamson, Trobuse, 25 June 1982, for a useful summary of this episode.

There are four key questions posed by the debate over the Falklands conflict: (1) the inhabitants' right to 'self-determination'; (2) the nature of territorial sovereignty; (3) the inhabitants' right to freedom and the preservation of their way of life; and (4) the argument 'that aggression shouldn't pay'. In order to argue out these four often ideological issues as they relate to the war in the South Atlantic, it will be best to debate them within the framework of what a genuinely just and realistic settlement might have entailed.

As I have indicated earlier, there were important pre-existing elements for a peaceful and democratic resolution of the problem. These could have been drawn upon to make a practical and principled settlement which could have encompassed:

- (1) The ceding of formal sovereignty over the Falklands to Argentina, provided adherence to the following:
- (2) The withdrawal of all Argentinian and British troops and police—the demilitarization of the area.
- (3) Local self-government through an elected Falklands council in liaison with a civilian representative of the central government in Buenos Aires
- (4) The guarantee of the indigenous inhabitants' present rights of law, language, religion, speech, assembly and travel.
- (5) The appointment of an International Control Commission to supervise these conditions.

Such an agreement would have ensured peace because it would have met the rational demands of both sides. Sovereignty, is transferred to Argentina, yet the democratic rights of the local people are preserved (the legitimate core of any British objection to the forcible takeover). It is dangerous to over-simplify arguments into slogans, but the approach that I will try to justify here could be summed up by saying that the Argentinian flag should fly over the Falkland Islands, but that the Junta's police should not be allowed jurisdiction.

1. Self-Determination

By common consent today, sovereignty is a matter to be decided by the people: people themselves should be the arbiter of their national identity, this is the fundamental democracy which belongs to them. However much this might be denied in practice while being proclaimed by leaders everywhere, the principle is of immense importance. It marks a fundamental, if as yet unrealized, step forward in the struggle for human emancipation from repression.

The immediate problem which the idea poses at its most general level is as mundane as the principle itself is lofty. Sovereignty may be something that belongs to the people, yet its actual shape is carved out in soil. The limits of sovereignty are defined in each case territorially. While the principle of self-determination is something exercised by people, its practical effect is to mark boundaries: land becomes the 'sacred' definition of the democratic right. This in itself need not make for difficulties, provided there is a clear match of territorial demarcation and peoples who desire separate sovereignties. One of the ways in which determining

sovereignty by popular consent can become difficult and often intractable is when the two aspects do not coincide and different peoples claim sovereignty in the same land.

There are at least three different kinds of 'self-determination' even with respect to national sovereignty. The first, with which the notion is most commonly associated, is the granting or winning of national independence, usually from a colonial power. Full statehood is then symbolized by entry into the United Nations. Extraordinary inequities of representation have resulted. Vast, multinational conglomerates such as India or Indonesia have become single nation-states, while dozens of tiny communities have also entered the world arena with the same formal status. Many of these have been islands. Yet the Falklands have not been able to achieve even this sovereignty. Had this been possible—if the Falklands could have emerged as a viable, English-speaking nation-state—then whatever Argentina's claims and feelings, the independence of the Falklands as a South American country would have been legitimate.

It was not possible. Other small islands luxuriate in statehood. Grenada, for example, is very much smaller than the Falklands (137 square miles as compared to 4,700). Yet Grenada has a population of around 100,000. It has even seen a popular, peaceful transfer of power in 1979 from an overtly capitalist to an avowedly socialist administration, a clear sign of genuine capacity for self-government, whatever else one might think. In Grenada there are peasants, capable of ensuring their own survival, and the community as a whole is large enough to have some degree of economic independence.

The Falklands community consists of no more than a small village with a few outlying hamlets. Except that it is not even that; it is a company settlement, entirely dominated by the external network of ownership and economic directives that established it originally. It is said by those who have been there that the Falklands have been maligned by their reputation for bleakness. Doubtless one could say the same for the moon, which is also beautiful but inhospitable. Basically, the Falklands are uninhabitable; even trees can barely grow there so unrelenting are its winds. Only a company that sought to make a tidy profit from the vast extent of its grazing and a maritime power that desired to control its harbour (mainly to prevent its use by enemy shipping) could ensure a degree of settlement. Among its inhabitants the administration, the local officials and pastor and the clerks are mainly supplied from outside. Because the Falklands are thus exploited on a global basis, some were needed locally to live there. But they could not establish themselves as a viable, autonomous community. Indeed, even as a sheep station, the Falklands were sinking into desuetude. Hence the implausibility of the present inhabitants forming a self-governing Falklands nation. There are only 1,300 native born residents on the islands at present, of which probably about 300 are children. 600 families can hardly form a country. Nor, sensibly, do they want self-determination. In 1980 the islanders sent an 'Earnest Request' to the Prime Minister asking her 'to reconsider the terms of the British Nationality Bill in order to accord full British citizenship to all the islanders of British descent'. (Their plea was rejected.)

The second type of demand for 'self-determination' is the important one claimed by 'stateless peoples' such as the Kurds, Basques, Biafrans or Palestinians. Their only relevance to this discussion is that when groups like the Kurds, for example, span territorial borders, their demand for their own sovereignty also becomes an external issue for the bordering states.

The third type of disputed 'self-determination' is that which comes about when the territorial claims of two states overlap and the allegiance of communities in one extend to the other (as in Ulster). The Falklands dispute is a variant of this type, as the British Government bases the defence of its control over the Falklands not on the grounds that the islands are part of the ux, whatever its inhabitants might think, but rather that its inhabitants desire to remain under the Crown whatever Argentina might propose. The question of principle here, then, is whether a local community subject to 'overlap' has the 'right' to determine which sovereignty it should come under; or whether, because that community is not itself demanding its own sovereignty, its fate can be ultimately decided by others.

Despite all the cant in the House of Commons, it is a choice irony that its own 'Churchillian' experience demonstrates that the wishes of the local community need not be regarded as sacrosanct. Take for example this argument in *The Times*: 'the wishes of the population concerned would seem to be a desisively important element in any solution that can hope to be regarded as permanent' (my emphasis). Is it not a well-rounded formulation of the right to self-determination of a community such as the Falklands? Yet the reader should pause for reflection if he or she nodded with agreement. For this quote from a *Times* editorial does not in fact concern the Falklands. In this instance it actually is writing about something as important as the outbreak of the Second World War. The passage comes from the conclusion to its lead editorial of 7 September 1938, which argued the ments of appeasement. It reads in full:

In any case the wishes of the population concerned would seem to be a decisively important element in any solution that can hope to be regarded as permanent, and the advantages to Czechoslovakia of becoming a homogeneous state might conceivably outweigh the obvious disadvantages of losing the Sudeten German districts of the borderland.

The argument was the central 'principled' expression of appeasement of which The Times was an advocate; it was the intellectual justification for the Munich agreement which soon followed. What happened was simple enough in broad outline. Over two million ethnic Germans lived inside the borders of Czechoslovakia, in the Sudetenland. They were predominantly sympathetic to the German state and demanded their full national 'rights' as Germans. The Czechs naturally opposed such demands and attempted to limit the autonomy of the local population. Hitler sought to support them. 'Appeasement' was the agreement by the British and French governments to allow the Sudetan Germans the 'right' to self-determination and hence to affiliate to the Reich.² This

² See A J P. Taylor, English History, 1918–1945, Oxford 1965, p. 426, who notes that the New Statesment took a similar stand.

dismembered Czechoslovakia by depriving it of its critical, defensible mountain border and much of its armaments industry, and left it exposed to subsequent German action (it made it a 'homogenous state', with 'obvious disadvantages...').

It is clear today that whatever local, community self-government the Sudeten Germans should have been allowed, they should not have been granted 'self-determination' when this meant their affiliating to the sovereignty of their 'kith and kin'. Historically, then, it is amusing that those who argue against the Falklanders' wishes being paramount in determining their national identity, should be the ones charged with 'appeasement'. For in fact those who favoured appeasement and decisively weakened Britain's position in 1938, by allowing the dismemberment of Czechoslavkia, were precisely those who argued that the wishes of a local community should determine its national allegiance. Indeed, we can say that the Second World War established as a cardinal principle that communities do not have the exclusive right to determine which state they should be affiliated to, and that their wishes have to be balanced against geo-political realities and other human rights. In general, rights anyway cease to be meaningful when abstracted from circumstances; principles are needed as guides to the complexities of the world not as a means of liquidating them. In addition, even on its own terms the demand of the Falklanders is ambiguous. They may call for continued rule from London, but that also means that London is entitled to exercise its sovereignty according to its own definition of its interests, and may thus dispose of the islands should it so wish. The uk's sovereignty cannot be unilaterally arbitrated by the Falklands population alone. Thus, while attention must be paid to the needs of the local people, neither philosophically, nor logically, not historically, are we obliged to conclude that the Kelpers have the right to self-determination, if that means that the Falkland Islands must stay British.

2. Territorial Sovereignty

We can now see how the issue of self-determination has been confused in the Falklands crisis. The 'principle' is never absolute and it applies primarily to the rights of a definable community to its own nation-state-hood. The case of the Falklands is one in which the local inhabitants are not able to exercise their own self-determination, and as a consequence, by claiming an allegiance to a far-away state, have created a question of overlapping sovereignties on the ground. This means that because the Falkland Islands is not a country or a potential country on its own, it has to belong to some other country in terms of sovereignty. Its sovereignty, then, is relative. It belongs either to Britain or to Argentina. I will argue that in this case it should be regarded as the possession of the latter. But this is strictly an argument by default. The Falklands are Argentinian rather than British, because they cannot credibly be independent. It is a relative argument of geography and sentiment, not of history and morality.

In terms of geography, the Falklands do not belong to Argentina merely because the islands are part of the Argentinian continental shelf. By that argument, Britain would have the right to overrun Ireland, and France the right to take its revenge on Britain for the defeat of Napoleon. The geographical argument is overwhelming in its actuality, only because if the islands have to belong to one country or another as a dependency, then clearly they should belong to that country of whose continental shelf they form a part, rather than a country more than 8,000 miles away in the other hemisphere.

So far as opinion is concerned, Argentina bases its claim to the islands upon history. The Malvinas were taken from them by the British 150 years ago and as Latin Americans they recognize the Hispanic borders of their continent only. To accord any legitimacy to such an argument is both dangerous and absurd. The world would be at war for another 150 years if every such contention were re-opened. Mexico's claim on Texas is far stronger than Argentina's claim on the Falkland Islands. Similarly, China would have a case to make out for Siberia; Poland on the Ukraine; Germany on Poland. Nationalist sentiments rooted in a partially mythological, partly accurate version of the past, should not sway us. One people's version of history, however passionately felt, will disparage and belittle the history experienced by other peoples. Argentina's nationalist perspective is no reason in itself for conceding sovereignty.

There is, however, good reason to take those feelings into account in one practical sense: They exist today, what other attitudes should be balanced against them? Whatever the Mexicans might feel about Texas, there are Americans who know that Texas belongs to the usa. In the case of the Falklands, however, there is no such balance of sentiment. Had you asked any number of Argentinians at the beginning of this year about the Falklands, they would have told you the Malvinas belonged to them. That is not to say that they would have endorsed a reckless takeover designed to divert popular attention from Argentina's economic plight. But whatever their political belief, its people regard the Falklands as part of their land. Had you asked any British citizen by contrast, most would not even have known where you were talking about.

In her Cheltenham speech, Thatcher asked, Why do we have to be invaded before we throw aside our selfish aims . . . ?' But were 'we' ever invaded in Britain? Even after the Falklands War this assertion seems bizarre; before it would have been incomprehensible. On the afternoon that Argentina seized the islands, for example, would an MP have telephoned his mistress to say, 'I'm afraid tonight's off darling, we've been invaded? If he had, he would certainly have been open to misinterpretation. Yet soon after the event, in New Society, Adam Roberts considered the question from the point of international law and wrote with academic solemnity: 'The Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands imposed a foreign military occupation regime on a part of British territory for the first time since the Second World War.' The same point was repeated fanatically by Enoch Powell. But it has a strange, deeply imperial ring. For the Falklands are only British territory in the sense that they are a British possession. They are not part of Britain. Thus there is a massive inequality of popular sentiment in Argentina and Britain respectively, over the fate of the Falklands. This is and will remain a decisive factor in the resolution of their ultimate destiny.

^{3 15} April 1982

The case for saying that the Falklands are Argentina's is firm. There was an act of aggression by the Junta, but it was not territorial aggression. Sooner or later, we can be sure that eventually Argentina's flag will be raised over them with general international recognition, whether or not other flags, such as that of the UN or even the Union Jack fly beside it. Nonetheless, the assignation of sovereignty is not a straightforward matter. The case is complicated in a central and important respect by the wishes and feelings of the existing islanders.

3. Restoring 'Freedom' to the Falklands

'Even though the position and circumstances of the people who live in the Falkland Islands are uppermost in our minds . . .' Michael Foot said nothing of their actual circumstances. One scours the great debate of 3 April for relevant detail. Rowlands said that the people there discussed even obscure Parliamentary questions, which would make the Kelpers one of the most idiosyncratic and articulate communities on earth. Other evidence contradicts this unlikely idea. So before considering what it means to say that the British are 'liberating' the Falklanders (Thatcher), or seeking to ensure their 'freedom' (Hattersley), perhaps we should enquire into the realities of their 'marvellous' British way of life.

A major source is the Shackleton Report of 1976, undertaken by a survey team headed by Lord Shackleton, son of the famour polar explorer. Its purpose was to inventory the resources of the islands and ascertain their potential for development. Because it argues the case for investment in the Falklands in a professional manner, the Report strives to be objective about the problems while also seeking to put prospects in the best possible light. Thus it is frank about the bleak future for sheep-raising on the islands, even though this currently generates 99% of the colony's exports (p. 31). Due to poor soil, hostile weather and a decline in the quality of the grassland, the local wool industry 'has been in slow but steady decline since 1919'. (pp. 118–23). On the other hand, not to miss the positive side of the picture, the Report notes that 'Penguins also help to improve the vegetation by their trampling activity' (p. 87).

The main theme of the Shackleton Report is dependency: the dependency on the Falkland Islands Company for trade, and the personal and psychological dependency of the people who live there, many virtually enserfed to its domain. Economically, the colony is 'a territory totally dependent on imports for most of its consumption and capital goods' (p. 31). The Falkland Islands Company (FIC) exercises a virtual monopoly over land (of which it owns 40%), shipping, auctions (which decide the price of wool) and banking (p. 19). In Port Stanley, 'there is little choice of employers' (p. 79) and the Fic-owned 'West Store' dominates retailing with two-thirds of all sales in Stanley and half of the sales in the islands (p. 243). Between 1955 and 1975 the company transferred $f_{.5}$ million to the United Kingdom in profits (p. iv). That might not sound like very much, but at the rate of £250,000 a year, it meant in 1974 the equivalent of more than 20% of the total income of all the inhabitants. This, however, seems to be a more a measure of the poverty of the majority of the Falklanders than an index of the lucrative situation of the Company.

⁴ Lord Shackleton and others, Economic Survey of the Falkland Islands, London 1976

What, then, is life like for the people who live there? The Falklands community seems to have been, before the recent war, a highly stratified and divided set of groups, as small communities often tend to be. In this instance the dependence on a single export product, itself controlled in the main through large holdings run by managers with a workforce of farmhands, must have exacerbated matters. The presence of government administrators posted from Britain, with much higher educational levels than the low standards found amongst the indigenous people, also added to this internal sense of strong social divisions (p. 81). The Shackleton Report gives the following table, based on Falkland Islands Government information, of the 914 registered incomes, in 1974.

Income Range (£)	Total No
below 500	130
100999	253
1,000-1,499	303
1,500-1,999	106
2,000-2,499	19
2,500-2,999	22
3,000-3,499	15
3,500-3,999	5
4,000-4,499	8
4,500-4,999	r
Over 5,000	12
Total Number	914
Total Income	£1,173,905
Average Income	£1,284

The exact population of the Falklands was not known in 1982, but the 1980 census showed 1,813 residents of whom 1,360 were born in the islands and 302 born in Britain. There are at least 300 children, most presumably of native-born families. Hence, there are probably a thousand native-born adults on the islands. The 914 incomes listed seem to include some of those of the temporary or posted residents working in the Falklands for some years. It can be assumed that these would lie in the higher income brackets; almost certainly, the 600 incomes below £2,000 a year went to Kelper families. The Report states (p 81):

Most native born islanders of what they themselves call 'the working class' live in conditions of dependence, which are attractive in immediate and material terms but which offer no encouragement for engagement in economic, social or political development, since scarcely any of them have a stake in the place. This applies as much at the collective as at the individual level. Apart from the right to vote for the small group of people who make up the Legislative Council (dominated, at least numerically, by farm owners and managers) they have no real opportunity to influence decisions on public affairs. . . It is clear that the distinctly low educational standards in the Islands leave locally taught people at a disadvantage in dealing with farm managers/owners and ux recruited persons, heightening the sense of dependence and relative inferiority.

This general condition worned the Shackleton team, which realized that community values had to be 'stimulated', especially among locally born people, for there to be any sustained economic development of the Falklands. These people had important qualities (p. 74),

They include honesty, versatility, physical hardiness and a capacity for sustained effort. Yet there appear to be other less encouraging features, such as a lack of confidence and enterprise at the individual and community level, and a degree of acceptance of their situation which verges on apathy

Various social factors reinforce this unsatisfactory situation. Because of the remoteness of the communities and the difficult terrain, there is little interaction between isolated settlements or even between the different groups within Port Stanley. In some country areas, 'the quality of life is distinctly low' (p. 79). This is made worse by the fact that, 'the sex structure of the population is remarkable for its lack of females' (p. 15). One consequence is a high rate of marital instability. In the outlying settlements,

It is common for 'the big house' to have the only voice contact with the outside world (usually by radio telephone). In these cases the farm workers must approach the manager or owner in any situation however personal, requiring early action from beyond the settlement, e.g. in regard to medical advice.

The result is that,

0

Although the attitude of most managers/owners is certainly benevolent, it may also be described as paternalistic. (Indeed, more than one manager told us that it might sometimes appear feudal.) (p. 76)

It is therefore not surprising that young people especially have been leaving the Falklands, 'in search of a greater degree of personal freedom' (p. 77). What future could they look forward to?

Indeed, the situation as regards community spirit and cohesion was perhaps well put to us by one resident when he said simply, "There is no glue" (p. 80)

It will be remembered that in the debate on the Falklands of April 3, Thatcher said, 'The people of the Falkland Islands, like the people of the United Kingdom, are an island race. Their way of life is British. . . .' And Michael Foot thundered back: 'The people of the Falkland Islands have the absolute right to look to us at this moment of their desperate plight.' After glancing at the official report of their situation, one wonders whether this should not have been said with equal fervour before, rather than after, Argentina's invasion.

Members of Parliament, however, seek to protect Britain's standing in the world, clearly a more pressing duty than spending one new pence worth of concern on conditions in the colonies. So it is not suprising that a part-owner of a Falkland farm stated: 'Most of the people on the islands believe that under the Argentine flag the islands can be developed and improved.' Indeed, it was hardly astonishing either to read, under the headline 'Sheap shearer changes sides', of a Falklander who took out Argentinian nationality. According to his girl friend, 'He wanted Argentina to have the islands because life there is so boring.'

If Britain was fighting for the 'freedom' of the islanders, what was the

⁵ Guerdien, 30 April 1982.

⁶ The Times, 29 April 1982.

power structure of the Falklands? The colony was ruled by a Governor appointed by Britain. He was advised by a 'Legislative Council' of eight. six of whom were elected by the islanders (the other two were ex officio). But the real ruling 'body' seems to have been an Executive Council in which not even the Legislative Council had a majority. Of the six on the Executive body, two were the Governor's appointments, two ex officeo and the other two came from the Legislative Council. The Falklands were not democratic by any stretch of the imagination at the ruling level. There has been some attempt at 'popular' improvement. Being a British community it has a trade union and once saw a strike for higher agricultural wages. (Could this mean that the Kelpers are stubbornly set in their old-fashioned practices—like the train drivers?) At any rate, political representation made little headway. The Stanley Town Council, which Shackleton describes as 'one of the very few potential counterweights to government' (p. 74) was, alas, 'abolished a few years ago' (p. 81). We are not told by whom, but perhaps its demise was connected with the fact that a 'National Progressive Party' on the islands proved to have 'only a brief life'. It seems probable that efforts to initiate a genuine autonomous polity foundered on the company's stranglehold and the Falklands' economic decline, accompanied by the demographic drain of its youth. Today, much of the actual Kelper population of Stanley consists of retired people who, after a lifetime of labour in the 'camp' (the local term for the countryside, from the Spanish campo), invest their savings in a clapboard house.

As for the Falkland Island Company itself, it was taken over by a subsidiary of the asset-stripping specialists Slater Walker, in 1972, and duly stripped of its assets. It was then sold to Charringtons, which was acquired by Coalite in 1977; its turnover currently represents 2% of Coalite's business. According to one discussion of the Falklands crisis, 'no islanders are now represented as either shareholders or directors of the company that now controls the Fig. Indeed, on 26 February 1982, just over a month before the war, the Fig decided at an extraordinary meeting that it would cease to be a publicly listed company, and thus is no longer obliged to publish even its basic information about the island's economy.'

Of course, the Kelpers do have their 'Britishness'. Shackleton notes, 'the most striking example of solidarity has been the common feeling on the sovereignty issue.' In a society of remarkable apathy, one which 'has no glue', where managers describe their relations with their labourers as 'feudal', and which is kept together by the Company's interests—the only thing it seems to have is extra-hemispheric loyalty. 'They have been loyal to us. We must be loyal to them', Thatcher insisted. Yet their national life is as empty of content as the Royal Wedding mugs placed loyally upon their dressers. Thatcher, who has destroyed community upon community in Britain itself has decided that the Kelper's way of life must be preserved at all costs. The Tory talk of saving the Falklands and 'restoring' its freedom is little more than a cruel manipulation of the pathetic dreams of a community long despised by London.

 ⁷ Latin America Bureau, The Falklands, When Crisis (forthcoming)
 ⁸ The Times, 3 June 1982.

Unwelcome Liberation

When their 'liberation' was complete, the stalwart messages of thanks and the kisses for the soldiers seen on television appeared to come from the farm managers and outside (British) nurses. When the surrender was announced, what 'should have been a moment for jubilation' was met merely with 'enigmatic reserve' by the Kelpers themselves.

At times it was hard to believe that they (the Falklanders) had any connection with the war. They behaved, it sometimes appeared, like peasants caught in an eighteenth century European dynastic clash—getting on with their farming as best they could while the rival armies swarmed around them.

Could this have been because, indeed, they did not have any real connection to the causes of the war, and that the conflict was nothing more than a clash of sovereignty? Perish the thought! Yet another reporter observed the same phenomenon:

The islanders never seemed particularly glad to see us, although that could be put down to their natural reserve and shyness with strangers. . . . More often than not they went about their daily lives as if the troops swarming around them did not exist. ¹⁰

At last, however, 'there seems little doubt that change is imminent', The Times reporter noted; a garrison is being considered which will 'treble the population of the Falklands and put civilians in a minority'. And so the islanders are coming to realise, 'that they are still an occupied people, albeit this time occupied by their own forces'. Not unnaturally, 'bitter words (are) being exchanged between locals and soldiers'.¹¹

I noted earlier the reports that the islanders were mostly left alone by Argentina's garrison. Why then should the British forces seem like occupying troops? Buried away, there were disturbing reports. The BBC's correspondent, Robin Fox, delivered some of the most fulsome panegyrics to the heroism of the '2 Para'. For example:

The achievement of H Jones and his men was heroism in battle on the scale of Leonidas and the men of Sparta at Thermopylae. . . . As we crouched by the line of gorse bushes, the only landmark at that point, the unit seemed entirely cut off 12

Yet even he felt obliged to add at the bottom of another of his articles in the *Listener*, something that was given little emphasis in the mass media.

I cannot pretend these men are angels. In Port Stanley, when the tension of battle was over, the amount of 'proffing' by British troops was considerable—some understandable, some not, such as the thieving of a collection of gold coins from a young vet who had just lost his wife in the final bombardment. ¹³

Perhaps because they were in the eye of the storm, many of the 'alow' and ill-educated Kelpers grasped what was happening long before the

⁹ Patrick Bishop, Observer, 20 June 1982

¹⁰ Gareth Patry, Guardien, 3 July 1982

¹¹ John Witherow, The Times, 29 June 1982.

¹² Robin Fox, Listener, 15 July 1982

¹³ Listaner, 8 July 1982. Could it have been that the '2 Pana' knew, as Fox did not, that they were if anything the Persians?

majority of the British public. Anthony Arblaster has described how the Kelper Jim Burgess was hustled away from the television camera by British officials when he stated that the islanders 'think they are being used, and I'm inclined to agree'. That was before the task force had arrived in the South Atlantic. Arblaster goes on to condemn the British action and in particular to denounce the way the 'rights of the islanders' were used by Thatcher's Government as 'an ideological and moral camouflage'. It is difficult not to agree. ¹⁴

All the same, part of that camouflage is instinctive rather than deliberate falsification. Thatcher and Foot may genuinely believe that if the Falklanders want to be ruled by them, then that is a 'liberation'. For the inhabitants of the ux this perhaps is the more serious problem. As Thatcher told the broadcaster Jimmy Young:

I am only here in the capacity for which I am here this morning because our people have the right to self-determination. Just let's get it right. This is what democracy is all about.

Got it? 'Our people have the right to self-determination.' The word 'our' is ambiguous: in one sense it reaches out to include all Britons ('We have self-determination'), but it also pulls sharply inwards to the possession, as in a remark between two Lords ('Our people are pretty slow off the mark, thank goodness'). To put it more empirically, it was widely noted that Cecil Parkinson MP, previously a figure of no public significance, was suddenly helicoptered into the War Cabinet and became its public spokesman, although he held no high office of state, and had only just been appointed by Thatcher as Chairman of the Conservative Party. But the composition of the British War Cabinet itself had less scrutiny. If we leave aside the only occasional presence of the Attorney General, it seems that its participants were:

Elected Persons
Thatcher (Prime Minister)
Pym (Foreign Affairs)
Nott (Defence)
Whitelaw (Home Affairs)
Parkinson (Conservative Party)

Nen-Elected Persons
Armstrong (PM's Office)
Wade-Gray (Civil Service)
Palliser (Civil Service)
Havers (Head, Diplomatic Service)
Lewin (Chief, Defence staff)

Clearly, some forms of self-determination are more determined than others. ¹⁵ Even the informed public in the ux can have only the haziest knowledge of half 'their' officials who presided over the war, if they have ever heard of them at all.

When the Tories and their supporting newspapers assert that the people of the Falkland Islands have been 'liberated', they mean to stand before the British electorate and say, 'we are the liberators of Britons. Therefore, we are your liberators.' The Falklanders themselves were merely the necessary cipher—all the more effective as a signifier for being as close to meaninglessness themselves as possible. The new language was nicely

¹⁴ Anthony Arbiaster, The Falklands. Thatcher's War, Labare's Guilt, a spirited Socialist Society pamphlet (available from 7 Carlisle Street, London W.1., £1)

¹⁵ The list is taken from a Sunday Times' sketch of the War Cabinet, 30 May 1982. In addition, Clive Whitmore, Thatcher's principal private secretary, attended most War Cabinet Meetings, see Guardien, 23 July 1982.

captured by a Sunday Telegraph post-Falklands editorial. It called for the 'emancipation' of workers from 'trade-union exploitation'. 16

4. 'Aggression Should Not Pay'

This was the statement that carried most conviction. It was said with a righteousness of purpose, yet strangely, or perhaps not so strangely, it was also said with remarkable aggression. Various formulas were added before the landing and final assault on Port Stanley, such as 'we would prefer the Argentines to go peacefully but For many these were little more than a civilized decoration to a sentiment of gut, animal instinct. The latter was put with military succinctness by Sir Arthur Harris. Marshall of the RAF. Now aged 90 he was Chief of Bomber Command during World War Two. When the Vulcan bombers tried to hit the airstrip at Port Stanley, he appeared in full uniform bedecked with all his medals to tell reporters, 'We can't be kicked around without retaliating'. 17 After victory, Cecil Parkinson explained, 'To do our duty to our own people, and our duty to the whole civilized world, we have dispatched a task force of prodigious power.'18 And one can feel in this formula the way the British Government has made a virtue out of retaliation.

The issue produced one of the most fascinating tensions of the war. Its backers in the UK were bursting with delight at their conquests and were keen to pursue them with vigour during the conflict itself, yet had to appear in public as sober as a judge. This discrepancy allows for a more general reflection: history takes place in the demotic. In so far as decision makers are really the masters of events, they act and react in a vulgar and personal fashion. In so far as they make up their minds in discussion with close associates, these exchanges are livid with the crapulous feelings of those whose lives are dominated by the struggle for power. Yet even in confidential documents, let alone public speeches, their motives are presented in the finest prose they can achieve. Reasons of disinterest rather than self-interest are always foremost—in the public domain. On occasions in Parliament, a flicker of the actual drive behind the righteousness may be sensed. That is what made the 3 April debate so informative. One of the most forthright MPs did not speak then, however. Alan Clark is amongst the most hawkish of the war party on the Tory benches and undoubtedly activated the feverish violence amongst Conservatives after Argentina's takeover. As the British Army was poised around Port Stanley, he told an interviewer that in his view the Falkland's war,

has enormously increased our world standing. You asked about world opinion—I mean, bugger world opinion—but our standing in the world has been totally altered by this It has made every other member of NATO say 'My God, the British are tough'.¹⁹

That is how Thatcher wants it too. Her objective internationally, but also at home and not least in Parliament, is to be thoroughly intimidating. She

¹⁶ Smiley Telegraph, 4 July 1982

¹⁷ The Times, 7 May 1982.

¹⁸ Speech to the Welsh Conservative Conference, Guerden, 14 June 1982

¹⁹ Guardean, 12 June 1982, in the Terry Coleman interview

told an American TV audience, 'I have the reputation as the Iron Lady. I am of great resolve. That resolve is matched by the British people.' And those Britons who do not 'match it' had better watch out.

On the international scene, this lesson hardly needs to be pondered. It was obvious that the British were able to push Argentina around because they had superior force. The response of one Brazilian opposition politician was to demand a crash programme for the construction of Brazilian nuclear weapons. Similarly South magazine, after noting that the Falklands War was a 'godsend for Israel', asked why the 1,800 Falklanders should merit such a 'rescue' operation when 750,000 West Bank Palestinians do not, and concluded 'it is all a question of power in the end'. In private, those who sent the task force will agree, adding that what is also needed is that extra charismatic quality: will. The nerve to use force matters as much: one needs not only 'clout' but also 'toughness'. The prodigious power of the task force from the civilized world, to use Parkinson's description, was not engaged upon a civilizing mission. It taught Argentina a lesson; its pedagogy for Buenos Aires and for the rest of the world is 'might is right' and 'have a spirit of iron'.

Nonetheless, one could still argue that if the British had not used force and had agreed to concede the Falklands sovereignty to Argentina after 2 April, while seeking only to safeguard the life of the inhabitants and offer them compensation, then this also would have made it seem that 'might is right'. Argentina had gained something by force—wouldn't this show that aggression pays? There are two kinds of answers to such a question. The first, in terms of the dispute itself. The kind of resolution to the conflict which I've argued for and which may well be implemented in the future is one that provides for local government under nominal Argentine sovereignty. The idea is obvious enough. As Navareed put it,

The trick is to recognize Argentine sovereignty over the islands while preserving the islanders' right to govern themselves. The possible compromise: make the Falklands an autonomous region of Argentina.... Argentina would have to give up posting its troops, teachers and policemen on the islands and guarantee the islanders' right to self-government.... Under such a scheme, the Argentines could claim to have vindicated their ancient claim to the islands. The British could be satisfied that London had honoured its promise to protect the islanders from dictators.²¹

Such an arrangement would not have 'rewarded' the Junta if international supervision had been imposed. What kind of advertisement would it have been to their own people, if the un were deployed to ensure that part of the local population retains its rights to free speech and assembly? If the Malvinas can have 'democracy', the Argentinian people might have argued, why can't we? By insisting upon the withdrawal of the Junta's troops (which was conceded in the negotiations), and granting sovereignty to the country of Argentina, Britain (and the un) could have demonstrated how negotiation and consent are preferable to the use of force.

²⁰ Smdey Times, 13 June 1982

²¹ John Wallcott, Navaruk, 24 May 1982

But the second and larger answer to this question, must be to challenge the pretentions that underlie the way it is posed. Iraq launched an unprovoked attack on Iran in 1980, and by the beginning of 1982 it was obvious to the whole world that—in a massive way—it had been shown that 'aggression did not pay'. Yet this did not deflect the Argentinian Junta. Indeed, it shows just how obtuse the world is in this respect that when Thatcher went to the United Nations to speak at its special disarmament session, it was generally felt that she was a female Begin. Us interviewers questioned her along these lines but she rebutted the comparison. Hs was guilty of aggression (though it seemed to be 'paying'), while Britain had been acting in 'self-defence'.

The questioners were right. What lies behind Thatcher's strictures against aggression is an imperial notation that favours it. Parkinson argued,

Each success for the dictators sucks life from the democracies. Allow Argentina to make a colony of the Falklands and you make a potential prey of every little nation on earth.

Thus the democracies, of whom there are so few, must protect all the little nations, of whom there are so many. This is really an argument for the West's global dominion, albeit quietly put. A similar, subtle argument was put by the historian Trevor-Roper. He drew a comparison with 1770 when the Spanish Governor of Beunos Aires occupied the Falklands. According to Trevor-Roper, this action, which had the surreptitious encouragement of the French, threatened to upset the Treaty of Pans (1763), a Treaty which he regards as having 'settled the world', and which established the Pax Britannua. The British assembled a great fleet. The Spanish then relinquished the Falklands without a fight, but they did not renounce their claim to the sovereignty of the islands, which is why, apparently, they remain contested to this day. However, the British Government in 1770 (and Dr Johnson on its behalf) were right, Trevor-Roper argues, to resist demands that there had to be a war with Spain merely because it refused to endorse British claims on the Falklands. What was involved was the general principle of the matter and the same is true today:

The essential issue is the same ... That issue is not the possession of the islands . nor the wishes of the islanders ..; it is the maintenance of real peace in the world. ... If Spain had kept its spoil in 1770 the signal would have been clear; the settlement of 1763 would have been everywhere at risk. Similarly, if Argentina had kept its spoil today, the rule of law would have been replaced by that of force and no undefended island would have been secure.²²

Thus Trevor-Roper lends all his distinction to what is evidently an imperialist world-view: behind the 'principle' that aggression shall not pay is a definition of peace—Pax Britannica—which was once the incarnation of global expansionism.

Hence also the foolishness of Michael Foot when he launched this argument in the first place in the House of Commons; that British 'deeds'

²² Hugh Trevor-Roper, Dash Tolograph 18 May 1982.

were needed in the South Atlantic, 'to ensure that a foul and brutal aggression does not succeed in our world. For if it does, there will be a danger not merely [a choice formulation] to the Falkland Islands, but to people all over this dangerous planet.' In the same speech Foot also dismissed the idea that there is a 'colonial dependence or anything of the sort' involved in the Falklands. Yet any expedition by the UK to 'put matters straight' 8,000 miles away, necessarily reproduces some sort of colonial style posture. Edward Thompson drew upon the real skills of a historian to see this truth about his own time and wrote soon after it began,

The Falkland's war is not about the islanders. It is about 'face'. It is about domestic politics. It is about what happens when you twist a lion's tail... [it is] a moment of imperial atavism, drenched with the nostalgias of those now in their late middle-age....²³

Even nostalgia, it transpires, is capable of renovation. What has surprised many is the vigour and 'professionalism' with which the Thatchentes have pursued their transports into the past. Britain covered its tracks towards the military demarche with a plethora of diplomatic notes and concessions as the Government humoured those who desired a peaceful settlement. Manoeuvres by General Haig and at the UN seem to have been followed with alarm rather than desire by the War Cabinet. For example, after the landing at San Carlos, 'their fear of a ceasefire imposed by the UN appears to have led cabinet ministers to demand a premature push out from the beachhead...' 24

The Sinking of the Belgrano

Above all, the attack on the General Belgrano remains to be explained. It was sunk on 2 May by the British nuclear powered 'hunter-killer' submarine, the Conqueror. After the Conqueror sailed back into the Clyde on 3 July, flying the skull and crossbones traditional for a submarine that has just made a 'kill', its commander confirmed that the General Belgrano had been attacked thirty miles outside the British-declared 'total exclusion zone', apparently without a warning and under direct orders from Fleet headquarters in the ux. Not only had he been in constant touch with the Fleet Commander in Britain, but the final order to attack was confirmed by London. Over three hundred of Argentina's sailors died as the second ship in its fleet went down in 40 minutes, under the impact of two conventional torpedoes. Questioned by Healey, Nott admitted in Parliament that the Belgrano had been some hundreds of miles away from the British task force. It thus posed no immediate threat. Why, then, was it sunk? An interview given by the President of Peru sheds a interesting light, as he was very active in the peace negotiations and had come up with an initiative that the British had apparently felt obliged to accept and which he felt Argentina was on the verge of agreeing to. The President felt 'on 2 May we were very close to a settlement, which was frustrated with the sinking of the Belgrano.' And he continued:

What was unfortunate was that violence impeded the accord. The very unfortunate sinking of the Belgrane at that very point also

The Times, 29 April 1982, reproduced in Zere Option, London 1982.
 John Shirley, Sander Times, 20 June 1982.

sank all the peace proposals we had made. This didn't have any justification. This was an act committed outside the area proscribed by Great Britain. And this created a very disagreeable climate. I still cannot console myself that the proposal I made wasn't approved the morning of May 2. With it we would have avoided the loss of the Belgrane, the loss of almost 400 young lives (on the ship) and the loss of the Shiffeld and all the destruction that has come afterwards.²⁵

Until the Belgrano went down, the conflict had been virtually bloodless—the only loss of life involved a few Argentinian commandos during the assaults on Port Stanley and South Georgia. The sinking of Argentina's cruiser was the real start of the fighting war, not the brief skirmishes a month before. It was, furthermore, completely illegal. After interviewing a member of the cabinet, Hugo Young concluded,

The purpose of the war cabinet's apparently intense search for peace had been... to make the British understand why they had to go to war; in other words, to maximize the chances that they would face and tolerate the casualties that were sure to come. From this it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the peace efforts were in part a charade....²⁶

Undoubtedly the Junta should have accepted the final un peace proposal, even though it was drawn up to cast London in the best possible light and even though it was hard to swallow after the huge loss of life on the Belgrano. The British finely calculated that Galtien was enough of adiplomatic pigmy to be out-manoeuvred and he was. Nonetheless, Argentina only attacked because it did not believe that there would be a war. When the Thatcher government determined on a riposte, the Junta made concessions and offered to withdraw its forces. In response the British ordered the militarily needless and illegal—might we say aggressive?—sinking of the Belgrano, which ensured that a war did indeed take place.

Since the end of the conflict in June various arguments in defence of the sinking of the Belgrano have been proposed. One is that it had Exocet missiles on board. But the cruiser and its escorts were hours away from the British task force and not headed towards it. Another claim is that after the Belgrano was sunk, the Argentinian navy was intimidated into staying in port, which was very helpful in the subsequent battle. This argument overlooks the obvious fact, however, that had the Belgrano not been destroyed there might not have been a full-scale military clash at all.

In her Cheltenham address, Thatcher claimed 'We fought to show that aggression does not pay and that the robber cannot be allowed to get away with his swag'. She likes a homely phrase and a simple moral to get the popular virtues of her politics across. To answer in kind—as far as her South Atlantic adventure is concerned—we may conclude by saying that two wrongs do not make a right.

²⁵ Interview with President of Peru, Fernando Belaunde Terry, Noviment, 7 June 1982.
²⁶ Smiley Times, 4 July 1982.

²⁷ For the full text of the 'final' British position, The Times, 21 May 1982

At the End of the Day

On 20 May the House of Commons discussed the Falklands question on the eve of the landings. Thatcher opened the debate in trenchant style and concluded her speech with the following, which was presumably a carefully drafted final statement of her war aims, prior to the decisive fighting on the ground.

The principles that we are defending are fundamental to everything that this Parliament and this country stand for. They are the principles of democracy and the rule of law. Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in violation of the rights of peoples to determine by whom and in what way they are governed. Its aggression was committed against a people who are used to enjoying full human rights and freedom. It was executed by a Government with a notorious record in suspending and violating those same rights. Britain has a responsibility towards the Islanders to restore their democratic way of life. She has a duty to the whole world to show that aggression will not succeed and to uphold the cause of freedom'

We are now in a position to examine clause by clause, this cardinal justification of the British military action.

- (1) Britain must defend 'the principles of democracy and the rule of law'. The sinking of the General Belgrano was illegal and therefore criminal. It led to the collapse of the major peace talks. It was an action committed on the British side, almost certainly at Thatcher's orders. For democracy see below.
- (2) 'Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in violation of the rights of peoples to determine by whom and in what way they were governed.' It did so, but Argentina's claim to territorial sovereignty is good, while a people do not have an absolute right to determine that they should be ruled by a distant, especially by a non-contiguous state. As we have seen from a glance at the Munich agreement of 1938, this fact—that the right of self-determination of peoples subject to overlapping territorial claims is not a decisive guide for policy—was established at a mighty cost in world war. While the rights of the Falklanders to the choice of their sovereignty was summarily 'violated', their right is not an absolute one (and none of them were killed).
- (3) 'Argentina's aggression was committed against a people who are used to enjoying the full human rights and freedom.' This is a farcical description of the actual conditions in the British colony.
- (4) 'It was executed by a Government with a notorious record in suspending and violating those same human rights.' Correct.
- (f) 'Britain has a responsibility towards the Islanders to restore their democratic way of life.' In so far as they had such a life it was not immediately destroyed by Argentina's takeover. The dismissal of the Colonial executive was not a huge blow against local democracy. The local self-government of the islanders could and should have been improved and increased by the establishment of an autonomous, local

administration, that could and should have been obtained under. Argentina's sovereignty. That was the full extent of Britain's responsibility after the Junta's invasion—to ensure non-violently the preservation of local self-government.

(6) Britain 'has a duty to the whole world to show that aggression will not succeed and to uphold the cause of freedom'. The 'whole world' will come to its own conclusion about the British action and London's attitude towards aggression, one that is unlikely to accord with Thatcher's rhetoric about her desire for 'freedom'.

This leaves one last claim in Thatcher's statement of Britain's war aims in the Falklands: 'The principles that we are defending are fundamental to everything that this Parliament and this country stand for.' So far as she describes the will and character of Parliament, we can do nothing but agree. But do the politics of Thatcher and Parliament represent what Britain stands for? Is their kind of sovereignty the one which its peoples will stand for now and forever? The answer will be contested.

A. de Braganca and I. Wallerstein eds.

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VII The Logic of Sovereignty

The swift conclusion of the Falklands conflict has added to the unreality that surrounded the affair. The issue of the islands themselves will hardly disappear while the ux and Argentina remain in contention over them. But there is already a sense in which the intense battle of April to June 1982 seems to be receding into Britain's past. All the opposition position, of course, have an obvious vested interest in shifting the maila's attention from Thatcher's triumph, and references to the Falklands Factor 'wearing off' can be heard with a stress that is clearly intended to hasten the process, as if the eruption of the war was merely an interference with the real politics of contemporary Britain. It is not hard to see why Michael Foot and his companions on the opposition front-bench (along with their Alliance counterparts) should feel this way. At the high point of his 'splendid' parliamentary challenge on 3 April Foot must have felt that he would soon be walking through the door of No. 10, the new patriot summoned by the country in the moment of crisis. Instead, Thatcher drove home the sword he presented to her with his demand for 'deeds', and Foot's popularity rating slumped to a historic low.

By the same token, Thatcher's standing took on a new national dimension and she dominated the political stage by the war's end. The Conservatives began to harp on the enduring, long-term need for the 'spirit of the South Atlantic'. Nigel Lawson, one of the outstanding advocates of Thatcher's economic strategy, declared that 'the profound importance of this event cannot be overemphasized'. He was not referring to the EEC's decision to override British wishes on food prices, at once a major and humbling blow to the national 'sovereignty' and to the Government's anti-inflation drive. It was instead the South Atlantic that had captured Lawson's attention:

The long years of retreat and self-doubt are over. A new self-respect, a new self-confidence, and a new sense of pride in ourselves has been born. It is the rebirth of Britain. ¹

The virtues of Born-again nationalism will surely be sung to the next election if not beyond. In her Cheltenham attack on the train drivers' union and the hospital workers, Thatcher emphasized,

We have to see that the spirit of the South Atlantic, the real spirit of Britain, is kindled not only by the war but can now be fired by peace.

Her partisan and class purposes are evident, but caution is needed before denying her claim. If the Falklands did not bring out the real spirit of Britain, the war certainly revealed a spirit of nationalism. Should we dismiss the Falklands adventure as an escapist interruption of what is actually British? Nigel Lawson's economic theories were in the process of erosion as they clashed with the stubborn noncompliance of British

¹ Financial Times, 29 June 1982.

society. The true passion of the Falklands for him was almost certainly its contrasting decisiveness. Which was also what attracted Thatcher into battle in the first place. Just as it was the failure of Britain's industrial economy that propelled Thatcher into office, so the economic and political frustration she experienced, in turn, drove her to action rather than negotiation in the South Atlantic. The long relative economic decline and party political crisis of the ux determined the military diversion and remains its 'underlying' cause. That is why the war should not be seen as some kind of excrescence or interference in the normal run of things. If it was a minor 'accident', it was also part of the more general breakdown. Why bother with the 'form' of the crisis, when what we should be concerned about is its 'real' content? The short answer is simply that content only appears in one form or another.

Popular Support for the War

The longer answer concerns the need to project with credibility a society different from Parliament's idea of Britain. For it must be emphasized again that while she exploited the opportunity it presented, the Falklands conflict was not just Thatcher's war. On the one hand, this means that her attempt to utilize the war for political purposes—to expropriate it as ber demonstration of fortitude—may yet rebound to her discredit. On the other hand, it means that the left especially should not forget the powerful feelings of nostalgia and solidarity that the fighting engendered, sentiments that apparently engulfed a majority in all social classes.² The surprise was part of the trick in gaining their endorsement. For the dispatch of the fleet was not the result of any argued majority, let alone consensus, within the public domain. The crudity of the House of Commons had already done its work: before any discussion could begin the task force was a fact sailing over the horizon. Once force was deployed and secret 'negotiations' were underway, loyalty and trust was the first response. Once servicemen began to die, to say that they should not seemed to many at that moment like a gratuitous kick against those who had already paid the ultimate sacrifice. Their lives then remained as a testimony to the 'justice' of the cause, until victory itself smothered the sudden increase of British fatalities from 150 to over 250 in its glorious winding sheet. Now that the war is over it is still difficult to point to the sheer faturassess of spending upwards of f.2,000 million to secure the Falklands, when successive governments have long said that they do not want the islands and when £200 million would have brought the Kelpers much closer to a 'marvellous' and 'British' way of life, as Thatcher put it, than they have ever experienced or ever will. And that difficulty comes from the deaths and the clash of sovereignty that have been involved.

So far as the dead are concerned, there stands the comment made by the mother of Mark Sambles, who was killed on HMS Glamorgan:

I am proud of my son—but not proud of the fact that he died for his country in a war which was not necessary. I accept that it's a

² The nature of public support for the war, and of opposition to it, is of great interest and importance. Various aspects can be distinguished, from the enthusiasm of the Murdoch press—in which *The Times* and the *Saw* proved to be heavenly sisters—to the special place all 'rural' communities have in English preconceptions. I hope to be able to consider such matters elsewhere, here space unfortunately forbids a more extended discussion.

serviceman's duty to fight. But in a futile situation like this, I think it's evil to put men's lives at risk when negotiations around a table can save so much heartbreak.³

For Mrs Sambles it is 'evil' to put men's lives at risk when so much heartbreak could have been saved by negotiations around a table. Here the word carries its full and proper meaning, stripped of incanted mysticism. And here too we can pause to consider the larger questions of sovereignty raised by any warlike engagement. For what is also remarkable about the comment of Mrs Sambles is that it could equally be applied to a larger international war of the great powers if only because any nuclear exchange would also be futile, infinitely more so through its sheer destructive consequence.

We have seen in the Falklands an interesting example of the logic of war. On the British side, the government in particular was able not only to escalate but also, deliberately and successfully, to induct the population into endorsing a mounting cost in ships and lives. Quite a lot has now been written about this in the larger scale, Edward Thompson especially has stressed the fearsome logic of nuclear weaponry. The Falklands War allows us to see rather clearly that there is another preliminary and constitutive force in addition to the intrinsic fatality of modern weapons, with their built-in timing and guidance systems. This is the 'logic' of national sovereignty itself.

Fatal First Reactions

Perhaps the best way to focus upon this is by reference to Jonathan Schell's recent book, The Fate of the Earth. He describes soberly and carefully and thus with almost intolerable force, the way a nuclear exchange would probably destroy life on earth as the ecosphere was ripped apart. In his third and concluding section, he suggests that the only way to ensure that we can avoid this catastrophe is through the abandonment of the nation-state as the major organizing form of human society. From Time magazine downwards the grim exactitude of Schell's description of the fate which awaits us has been heralded. It is a 'must' for everyone to read. But his conclusions have been derided as somehow the unpractical musings of an author carried away by the pains of his imagination. How good of him to describe what might happen if the bombs went off; this is the fear the population has got to learn to live with. Yet how foolish of him to think that they could do without se, sovereign leaders—chosen of course—for their protection. Schell was not so naive as to fail to see that this would be the response:

National sovereignty lies at the very core of the political issues that the peril of extinction forces upon us. Sovereignty is the 'reality' that the 'realists' counsel us to accept as inevitable, referring to any alternative as 'unrealistic' or 'utopian' ⁴

Is it in fact wrong to argue, as Schell does, that the choice is either 'utopia' or death?

³ Bridport News, 18 June 1982, quoted in Tribune, 25 June 1982

⁴ Jonathan Schell, The Fate of the Earth, London 1982, p. 218.

Schell argues that 'nuclear powers put a higher value on national sovereignty than they do on human survival'. He also suggests that one of the factors that might drive the leaders of a nuclear power to retaliate against a first strike would be revenge. However futile and catastrophic the gesture, the desire for vengeance may override any 'statesmanlike' sobriety. Indeed perhaps that 'gut instinct' is an essential attribute for 'statesmen', a measure of leadership quality. In March such an argument would have been dismissed as alarmist by commentators, who strive themselves for the judicious realism suitable to practical 'men of the world'. In Britain, in particular, such patronising tones run easily from the tongue. For how could anyone suggest in this, the 'oldest' and 'most mature' democracy, where the accretions of the ages and the wisdom of experience may be found in the traditions of every establishment, that such a naked emotion of the mob as the desire for revenge might seize the appear classes?

Yet since Schell wrote, we have seen precisely that, and a second-rank but none the less nuclear power has sent its nuclear submarines and its ships almost certainly armed with tactical nuclear weapons into combat. (It has been suggested that the Sheffield was sunk with nuclear depth charges on board.) What was the aim of this force? To wrest back sovereignty of an obtruse and remote kind, and to salvage national pride, both of which were clearly ranked above the lives of the people directly concerned. Revenge was indeed the decisive passion. Nor was this limited to mastodons from World War Two like 'Bomber Harris'. Encounter published two somewhat shamefaced reflections upon this emotion, neither by opponents of the war: one by Edward Pearce, the other by the magazine's columnist 'M'. This described how:

I felt the bile rising like a gusher: stand back—I may explode And what was I really angry about? The use of force, the violation of the peace, the subjugation of 1,800 Britons who don't want to be Argentines . . . beneath the expressions of outrage were much more powerful, stavistic feelings. It was intolerable that Britain should be so humiliated. . . Such was the immediate reaction—hardly less than dancing in the streets of Buenos Aires . . . Nor, of course, was I alone. Politicians of all classes were making similar noises.

'M' goes on to reflect upon this insane passion,

What worried me about my own primitive feelings—to say nothing of other people's—was not only the danger of the Falklands Islands crisis, but the volatility of public opinion, likely to be just as fickle as fire.⁵

Now what is really interesting about this comment is that public opinion in Britain did not flare up with the same virulence. Perhaps twenty per cent of the population had a reaction like that of 'M', and doubtless the dinner parties he attended swilled with like sentiments. But it was not public demand for war that carried along reluctant and supposedly more far-sighted politicians. It was, on the contrary, the newspaper owners and MPS, the 'political' dons and military bureaucrats, who were most inflamed by the news. Why? Because for them their sovereignty, their world standing, their 'credibility' in the eyes of their equivalents abroad,

⁵ Exceptor, June-July 1982, p. 33.

were at stake. This factor should not be underestimated as a pressure upon those for whom an international discourse is part of the daily routine of business. The idea that a Peruvian could smirk across the cocktails and make a joke about the 'Malvinas'; the idea that a German might sidle up and inquire what the British Navy was really for, after an arms expenditure since 1945 of £110 billion; the idea that a Washington Post staffer might commiserate with the Telegraph editorialist—these are the kind of things that constitute a 'national humiliation'. Our poor leaders experience such things personally.

At the beginning of this essay I considered at some length the conduct of Parliament on 3 April and glanced at every contribution made that day. What we saw was a record of collective responsibility. There was a general atmosphere of vindictiveness and revanchism in the Commons and those few who were prone to dissent were swiftly intimidated. Pearce vividly described it as a 'Hate-In'. The Prime Minister was egged on by her confidants, especially those whom she most trusted and who had been responsible for her promotion to the leadership of the Conservative Party. She did not conduct a 'madman' theory of war along the lines that Nixon had once hoped would frighten the Vietnamese into capitulation. Rather she personified the entire asylum of Britain's 'representatives'.

Which is why the Falklands affair stands as an exemplary vindication—if a minor one—of the general argument in *The Fats of the Earth*. Three aspects may be discerned. First, sovereignty is the special passion of those who deem themselves to be the leaders of a nation. For those 'at the top' and those who swarm around them, questions of sovereignty matter more extremely than for the majority of their compatriots. Those to whom our destiny is 'entrusted' project themselves as personages of experience and balanced judgement. In fact they may prove to be the most prone to react with the speed and venom of a mob.

Second, once a nation's leaders have committed the state to 'do something', then the nation's 'credibility' is put on the line. 'Credibility' is something peculiarly attached to sovereignty, especially in any conflict when it is always a factor which seems to be 'at risk' or about to be 'lost', especially in 'the eyes of others'. The word is American in its current geopolitical usage. In Britain the notion of 'standing' often takes its place. When people said that what was at stake in April was Britain's 'standing in the world', this was equivalent to Americans saying us 'credibility' was involved in Vietnam or Iran. Credibility becomes even more significant once weapons systems are openly put on alert or deployed. Once sabres are rattled a climb-down is all the more 'humiliating' and thus a greater blow to one's 'credibility'. But once men and weapons go into any engagement, then their military logic becomes a massive pressure for further action in its own way. There were some sobering examples of this during the Falklands War. The most striking—often repeated just before the landing at San Carlos—was that the task force could not be kept indefinitely in the winter seas of the South Atlantic: it had either to attack or return. The spokesmen who said this may have desired a landing, but that did not prevent what they said from being technically and hence 'neutrally' correct. So those in the peace movement who have emphasized the terrible casuistry of 'weapons-thought' and the logic of exterminism may be congratulated.

Finally what we can see more clearly thanks to the Falklands dispute is the dangerous **mix** of high technology and the 'sovereignty' of nation-states in decline. The system of the latter primes the former and puts it into play. Those who wear the mantle of greater patriotism and bear the responsibility of personifying a country's 'place in the world' may react almost instantaneously in a crisis, especially where their pride is at stake, where their opponents may strive to censure them and when they have been caught off guard. Their power and position then allows them to define the 'national interest' before any public, let alone democratic argument has been heard. The logic of sovereignty is overswift and has no place for second thoughts. Meanwhile, the technological and military 'logic' of nuclear weapons systems places a greater and greater premium on the same immediate reactions of those who control their use.

We do not yet know nor have seen created those forms of direct, popular self-determination that could displace the curse of sovereignty. Any overall critique of the present lacks practical bite because of this absence. The Falklands crisis in Britain may demonstrate the need to present a socialist alternative to the politics of Britain's capitalist decline; if so, it also shows the need to transform the terms within which 'the nation' is itself conceived. The starting place for this is the House of Commons, because of the manifest decadence of its proceedings. Perhaps they make it too easy to mock. On the other hand they also reveal the complacency of the oft-heard defence of parliaments, that at least they are preferable to junta-like dictatorships. If that is their justification then such assemblies stand condemned: they are merely better than the worst. For whom is this good enough? Meanwhile, the specificity of the institutions of the nation in London and Buenos Aires should not blind us to their place in the international state system of competing sovereignties, of which both are a product, and which international Churchillism itself influenced directly after 1945. Thatcher justified the Falklands War by saying that the nation's honour was at stake. Many may snigger, but no major political challenge was mounted to combat, centrally and explicitly, the feeling she enunciated. But for so long as the institutions and passions of nationalist sovereignty retain their domination, in Britain as elsewhere, the world will continue to be ruled by those who are likely to ensure its destruction.

14 May-23 July 1982

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The collapse of the Mexican peso, threatening the solvency of the world financial system, has dramatized the now rampant socio-economic instability which has become concentrated in the immediate borderlands of US capitalism. The abrupt crash of the Mexican 'model' only throws into sharper relief the unprecedented crisis which has been developing throughout the entire Caribbean Basin (including Central America) since the 1974-75 recession. In a pattern both complex and inherently destabilizing, the diverse economies of the region have become increasingly interlocked with the domestic US economy (and particularly its 'Sunbelt' component). At one pole, the penetration by US capital since the early sixtles has metamorphosed the old forms of domination into something approaching a state of ultra-dependency: creating a phantasmagoric archipelago of modern plantations, free trade zones and sumptuary tourist enclaves counterposed to wretched minifundia and burgeoning urban shantytowns. At the other pole, this transformation of local economies—especially the displacement of the subsistence sector by mechanized export agriculture—has inaugurated a huge new immigration of historic consequence. No less than oneseventh of the native-born populations of Mexico and the Caribbean now lives in the United States, and well before the end of the century this expanding low-wage proletariat of Hispanic and Afro-Caribbean origin will displace US blacks as the largest minority group. This coupling of the new immigration with the organic crises of local social formations induced by SU domination—is creating a political configuration of an increasingly explosive character.

In the meantime, the revolutionary movements of Central America remain the storm-centres of the class struggle in the Western Hemisphere. In a bold survey of the escalating crisis in the isthmus, George Black—author of the major English-language history of the Sandinist Revolution, 'The Triumph of the People'—argues that Central America represents an epicentre as potentially significant in its geopolitical impact as the Middle East. The region, he argues, is caught up in a fused crisis of accumulation and political domination whose regionally and nationally specific aspects must be grasped in their dialectical particularity. His analysis contrasts the patterns of class and state development in Central America with those of other Latin American countries. He emphasizes the brutal legacy of the preemptive counter-revolutionary

terror of the 1930s—the murder of Sandino in Nicaragua and the extermination of the insurgent Salvadorean peasantry—in precluding an agrarian reform and correlative dirigiste evolution of a Mexican type. Likewise, the CIA's destruction of the one authentic populist-democratic—interlude—the Guatemalan 'Revolution' of 1944–54—closed the remaining space for a 'third force' solution and established a prototype of sustained military terrorism subsequently emulated by the Southern Cone dictatorships of the sixties and early seventies. The cumulative result (with the partial exceptions of Honduras and Costa Rica) has been a half century of unbroken violence against the peasantry and urban proletariat—a record perhaps without equal anywhere else in the world; the decimation or atrophy of the political 'centre'; and the retrogression of the state to the most primitive exercise of coercion unmediated by concession or class compromise.

The current collapse of cash-crop prices has driven the ruling blocs even more ferociously into a policy of super-exploitation buttressed by the military and economic backing of the Reagan regime. Since the fall of Somoza, the pace of class polarization has everywhere accelerated, despite the initial differences in national situations. In El Salvador, a popular bloc, uniting Christians, Social Democrats and Leninists, remains defiantly undefeated in the third year of civil war; while in Guatemala, the Indian masses are being mobilized in a war of sheer survival against the evangelical exterminism of Rios Montt. In Honduras, the former inertia of the military has been superseded by the more familiar regional pattern of official deathsquads and growing lists of desparecidos. Even that exception to the rule, Costa Rica-home of the only genuine bourgeois-democratic political system in the region—has # suddenly shifted right in the face of national bankruptcy, the centralization of capital and the fall of living standards. Over and above these specific dynamics of social confrontation, however, the United States is now superimposing the imperative of its counter-revolutionary grand design, obsessed with the prevention of new Cubas on the 'mainland'. With the Honduran military as their pawns, the Reaganites have already launched their first military forays against an encircled Nicaragua. Certainly the popular left of Central America has responded to the US threat and the systematic violence of their oppressors with exemplary revolutionary will and a highly original model of mass mobilization and participation—synthesizing traditions both of Marxism and the radical Church. Yet as George Black emphasizes in his conclusion, the exceptional regional and international conjuncture that favoured the final victory of the Sandinistas in 1979 is unlikely to be repeated. Any

further socialist breakthrough would undoubtedly provoke the most violent reflexes of the White House and Pentagon, and only the most massive international solidarity can ensure the space for a popular victory and emancipation in Central America.

In NLR 129 we published an article on the 'Freudian Left' by Christopher Lasch which challenged the relevance of the theory of 'patriarchy' to explain contemporary gender roles or to indicate a path to sexual liberation. Now Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh-authors of the recently published 'The Anti-Social Family', NLB/VERSO-debate his central thesis of a narcissistic and post familial epoch founded on the decay of the traditional oedipal nexus. In their view, 'it is irrelevant to mourn the death of the family when our society is more profoundly "familialized" than ever before'. Applauding Lasch's humanist emphasis on real needs and his trenchant critique of consumerism, they question whether he has not hypostatized a specific family-form (the classical bourgeois pattern) while deflecting the critical salience of feminist theory and its analyses of women's oppression. Exploring some of the recent literature on the psychology and politics of 'mothering', they argue the need for a more adequate theory of gendered subjectivity which encompasses both the nuturing roles of women as well as the family's external social and class matrix.

Michael Foot's efforts to cleanse the Labour Party of intransigent socialists, at the behest of the capitalist press, are now moving toward a climax. Against this backdrop, David Coates stands inpenitent in defence of his earlier argument (NLR 129) against the entry of Marxists into the Party. Confronted with the critiques of Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare (NLR 132) and Geoff Hodgson (NLR 133); he takes up separately the questions of both 'space' and 'agency' in reformist strategy. While denying any abstract, 'zero-sum' game concept of the class struggle, he rejects the likelihood that under present conditions of a worldwide slump a Labour Government of 'mixed complexion' could achieve any more than the self-administration of austerity and cuts. He suggests that the most effective solidarity for the 'residual and predominately defensive role' of the Labour Left is the sustained mobilization of extra-parliamentary struggle by the independent Marxist left on the outside.

Finally, Terry Eagleton explores some of the less obvious and orthodox elements in Wittgenstein's personal and intellectual milieu. The 'friends' of Wittgenstein included the Marxist historian of antiquity, George Thompson; Piero Sraffa, patron of the imprisoned Gramsci; and

Nikolai Bakhtin, a White emigré turned Communist whose brother was Mikhail Bakhtin, the seminal Soviet aesthetician. This web of elusive linkages forms a tentative framework for comparing Wittgenstein's outlook with other linguistic or semantic strategies, ranging from Derrida's deconstructions to Adorno's negative dialectics. He concludes with an arresting new look at Gramsci's unfinished writings on organic ideologies which alone, he argues, offer a problematic for overcoming the antimony—so ingrained in Wittgenstein's parochial and mystical mentality—between practical and theoretical thought.

THE ANARCHISTS OF CASAS VIEJAS Jerome R. Mintz

"A triumphant validation of 'oral history'. At last we know what really happened at Casas Viejas despite all the nonsense that was written about it at the time and subsequently . . . a highly readable book. I was fuscinated and moved by it."—Julian Pitt-Risers

The uprising in Casas Viejas—a classic example of anarchist rural rebellion—was one of the stepping stones to the Spanish Civil War. Many attempts have been made to analyze the organization and leadership of the anarchist movement in which these rural workers and peasants were swept up,

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Central America: Crisis in the Backyard

The five republics south of Mexico seemed until the late 1970s the most secure region of domination for a us imperial system in retreat after the trauma of South East Asia.* Many saw Nicaragua's 1979 Sandinista victory over the Somoza dynasty as merely vindication of theories of the inevitable collapse of dependent capitalism in the most grossly archaic outposts of the periphery. But the rapid emergence of revolutionary challenges in El Salvador and Guatemala, and the decomposition of the ruling bourgeois alliances in those countries, forced greater scrutiny of events in Central America. Now, economic disaster threatens to engulf Costa Rica, long one of Latin America's most sophisticated models of bourgeois consensus rule. And Honduras—archetypal banana republic—is undergoing a vertiginous descent into militarism under a facade of democratic legitimation. In these two countries, where internal social formations have not reached a critical point of rupture, the crude new geopolitics of Reaganism have accelerated their domestic contradictions by selecting them as instruments in a strategic design.

1

This essay considers the distinct levels of the Central American crisis, which has so rapidly assumed regional dimensions. The complex configuration of political, economic and geopolitical modalities—some nationally specific, others supra-national—make generalities exceedingly difficult. There is simultaneously the crisis of impenalist control, expressed at a regional level, and the distinct crises of five distinct social formations, each with separate national dynamics. Common features exist; each state has based growth on the export of primary agricultural commodities—first coffee (classic crop of the local oligarchs) and bananas (in us-owned enclaves); later cotton, sugar and beef. In pre-revolutionary Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador, the organically weak state was rapidly reduced to an instrument of coercion and elite enrichment. But these commonalities do not determine the simultaneity of crisis conditions. The state-society confrontation has been reached along different paths and with different rhythms.

None the less, we can assign some fundamental hierarchy to the manifestations of crisis in the social formations of Central America. In El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala the crisis of accumulation was preceded by—and in turn exacerbated—a mounting crisis of political domination. In Costa Rica and Honduras, with more elastic modes of domination, geopolitical pressures and economic slump combine to provoke a crisis of legitimacy at the political level.

Central America is not simply suffering a mechanical replication in the local economies of global capitalist crisis as it did in the 1930s, though the recession has aggravated structural economic weaknesses in the region. But nor is the inherent debility of dependent economic structures an adequate explanation. The current economic slump is the latest in a cycle—recurrent at roughly 5–7 year intervals—which has characterized the Central American economies in the twentieth century. What distinguishes the impact of this slump from others is partly the likelihood of permanently changed world market demand (prefiguring sustained crisis in all the agro-exporting economies of the periphery), but even more the incessant prior build-up of unresolved contradictions between ruling elites and the mass of the population, reaching explosive proportions in the last five years. Economic and political polarities in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala have been counterpointed by

^{*} My thanks to colleagues at the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA), especially the Central America research team and America Badillo-Veiga and Judy Butler, whose indispensable comments improved an earlier draft of this article. I am also indebted to fellow participants in the first regional seminar of the Instituto de Investigaciones Econômicas y Sociales (INTES), held in Managus, June 1982—a unique and exemplary effort to place the social sciences at the service of the Central American people and their revolution.

¹ Panama is omitted from this study in accordance with convention. Historically it has remained outside attempts at regional integration. Though geopolitically relevant to Central America, its peculiar economic structures set it apart. Not dependent upon cash-crop exports, it serves primarily as a base of operations for transnational capital and services, and as a platform for its counterinsurgency. Despite this powerful imperialist presence, the Canal Treaties have secured a continuingly stable social base for the regime. Existing political structures appear resilient, able to minimize contradictions between bourgeois fractions. Industrial growth rates remain high. One can speak neither of a crisis of accumulation nor of an exhaustion of the current political model.

unprecedented popular mobilization and a revolutionary movement of coherence and originality. Partial reforms and concessions—even if compatible with the monopolistic ambittons of the ruling bourgeois elites—would not attenuate these conflicts.

Finally, the chronic inability of the United States to retain long unchallenged regional hegemony superimposes a geopolitical knot on domestic factors. Even more than a superimposition, however, interventionism has catalyzed general crisis conditions. The convergence of all these elements makes it legitimate to speak of a rupture at regional level. Only exhaustive analysis beyond our scope here would fully grasp the five separate social formations: the proletarianization of the peasantry, the growth of an industrial working class, and the fissures within the hegemonic bloc under the impact of retarded modernization. For unlike the majority of Latin America, the region had not launched a programme of industrialization during the readjustment of the world capitalist economy in the 1930s. This is one pointer to the 'delayed' quality of Central America's revolution. The other was us selection of the area as a counter-insurgency guinea-pig after the Cuban revolution. By 1965, Guatemala had the continent's strongest guerrilla movement. Two years later it was annihilated by ferocious state violence, which staved off the inevitable for another decade.2

Twenty years of rapid, if erratic, economic growth and capitalist transformation have been unaccompanied by any parallel growth of democratic institutions. Far from encouraging democratic reforms, local elites have subverted them with suicidal single-mindedness. The murder of Sandino in 1934 and of Farabundo Marti and 30,000 peasants in 1932 presaged a fifty-year-long dark night of authoritarianism. Though today's revolutionary movements seek lineage and continuity—incarnated in a unifying national-symbolic sense by the figures of Sandino and Marti—the resurgence of popular opposition is spectacularly abrupt after years of defeats.

The Legacy of Guatemala's Defeated Revolution

Only one shaft of democratic light shot through this half-century of darkness: Guatemala's 1944-74 Revolution. That unfinished process is a reference point pregnant with lessons. For the bourgeoisie and the United States, it was a threat which had to be aborted. Though its reforms were limited, the Guatemalan revolution brought tangible political advances, eradicated only by institutionalized terror.

At the zenith of the Cold War, the denouement was inescapable. The Arévalo and Arbenz governments had successively attempted to modernize the state within bourgeois democratic parameters, expanding domestic markets through income redistribution and agrarian reform. The new power bloc was constituted by the reform-minded bourgeoisie and emergent petty bourgeoisie, although the oligarchy retained muscle through its monopoly of coffee exports, the pivot of capital accumu-

² Ruy Mauro Marini, 'The Nicaraguan Revolution and the Central American Revolutionary Process', Contemporary Marxism 3 (San Francisco) p. 62.

lation. This new bloc was temporarily able to generate polyclass consensus; but without a strong national bourgeoisie capable of sustained reforms, the autonomous working-class and peasant organizations fast outstripped the limits of mere populism and a controlled democratic opening. Continuation of the experiment opened the possibility of socialist transformation. Radicalized agrarian demands—above all the expropriation of unused United Fruit Company lands—proved the last straw for the us State Department and in 1954 CIA-financed mercenaries deposed Arbenz. The urban proletariat and peasantry kept faith in the state, only to discover that an army willing to overthrow an antiquated and suffocating dictatorship was not prepared to countenance socialism.³

Much subsequent Central American history revolves around the Guate-malan Revolution and its sequel. The process of unmediated capital concentration, typified by the gangiterismo of the Somozas and the Guatemalan generals, rested on destroying credible reformist options. Their rapacity depended upon starvation, wages, massive unemployment and wholesale repression as the only means of perpetuation and expansion. But capitalist transformation has produced irremediable schisms within the bourgeoisie and spawned radicalized mass movements merging defensive economism and the demand for structural transformation. Democratization is only attainable through a frontal military collision of revolutionary violence with the state, even if socialism is not on the immediate agenda.

A history of blanket imperialist domination and subversion of all reform initiatives decrees that some sectors of today's armed movement fight for incipient socialist democracy while others strive for uncompleted bourgeois democracy. The carnage perpetrated by Central America's military rulers—100,000 dead in three years—is not aberrational but systemic. The movement which now challenges their domination defies easy political categorization. The region is a coherent unity only in terms of the fundamental identity of its economic base, its uniform openness to external economic pressures, and the geopolitical pretensions of the us. But the sudden and uneven spread of capitalist relations, the lack of a true national bourgeoisie, ethnic diversity and the complex heterogeneity of cultural forms suggest that the resolution of social contradictions is not susceptible to reductionist mechanical schema or an obsessive concern with the material base. Ideological and organizational factors are unusually important and dictate different strategies in each society. National differences are brought sharply home in the practice of a new kind of revolutionary organization, nurtured in the failures of traditional Marxism and foquismo. Profoundly concerned with national ideology and culture, their mentors are Lenin, Gramsci and the historic experience of their own people.

³ The best analyses of the Guatemalan revolution include NACLA, Guatemala, Berkeley 1974, especially pp. 44–56, and Gabriel Aguilera Peralta Estado Militar y Lucha Revolucionaria en Guatemala (San José, Costa Rica, 1982) mimeo. Kinxer and Schlesinger give a good journalistic account of the 1954 'hiberación' in Bitter Fruit the United Story of the American Comp in Guatemala, New York 1982

⁴ See Edelberto Torres-Rivas, 'Ocho Claves para Comprender la Crisis Centroamericana', *Polisines* (San José, Costa Rica, 1981).

I. Growth and Dependency: Notes on the Economic Crisis

Statistics display the symptoms rather than the root causes of current economic malaise. Monetary reserves are down to critical levels. Each of the five countries has run a consistent budget deficit since 1976. Capital flight is intense as the bourgeoisie packs its bags for a comfortable Miami exile. By 1980 inflation—a wholly new phenomenon—had hit double figures in all five countries. In El Salvador and Honduras it touched 20%; in Nicaragua by 1979 it peaked at 85%; and in 'stable, democratic' Costa Rica it has broken through 100%. To match this, for five years now annual growth rates—once over 10% in Nicaragua and Costa Rica have slowed to almost zero. The economic crisis does not reflect any historic failure to secure growth, but rather the unwillingness of dominant bourgeois groups to distribute the fruits of sustained postwar growth. The genesis is political rather than strictly economic. The contemporary short-run decline in growth rates is superimposed on glaring social contradictions (class against class and fraction against fraction), generated by decades of monopolization of wealth and power.

Socioeconomic differentiation has spiralled as domestic crisis and the shock waves of global recession reinforce each other. The high relative weight of imported inputs and soaring costs of petroleum and agrochemicals mean rapid impoverishment for small and medium producers, already non-competitive on world markets as a result of obsolete technology. High interest rates and revolutionary attacks on economic targets inhibit fresh investment from non-monopolic sectors. Corporations, taking advantage of lowered wages and superior liquidity, swallow up smaller firms. Regional unemployment, always endemic, now affects increasing numbers of previously secure workers.

- All this aggravates the most obvious component of the crisis: the unprecedented collapse of primary agricultural commodity prices. Coffee alone represents 31% of export earnings for Guatemala and Nicaragua, 44% for El Salvador. Even larger private coffee producers are losing \$30 for each hundredweight produced. Export quota cutbacks translate into mass lay-offs of plantation labourers. The agrarian sector has shown negative growth in Costa Rica since 1979; in Honduras and El Salvador since 1980; and in Guatemala since 1981. In contrast to previous slumps, the current drop in prices is sustained, with no sign of imminent upturn. Furthermore, the collapse has coincided with world recession and major transformations in the troubled metropolitan economies. Reoriented technological demand from the centre makes it hard to foresee a recovery for conventional cash-crop economies. The domestic and external origins of the crisis become indecipherably entangled, given the extreme openness of the regional economies. The clearest indicator of this vulnerability is massive foreign debt. Artificial catalyst for earlier growth and illusory escape-route from present difficulties, it has multiplied forty-fold in twenty years.

⁵ For example, fertilizers and pesticides account for 50% of overheads in coffee production ⁶ Inforpress (Guatemala City), no. 447, 18 June 1981

The debility of local political institutions made Central America an easy scalping-ground for expansionist foreign capital, first European and then from the United States, whose monolithic application of the Monroe Doctrine gave literal substance to the concept of the 'backvard'. First coffee and then bananas characterized an export-oriented development reliant on cheap land and labour, secured by destroying indigenous communal landownership. The primitive despotism of the coffee barons retained precapitalist production relations with forced labour obligations. The dependence of the coffee oligarchs on international demand and circulation gave them sweeping political latitude at home, crystallizing rigid and retarded socio-political structures. Infiltration of this inelastic social formation was simple for the banana multinationals, which by the early twentieth century monopolized communication and distribution facilities in Costa Rica, Honduras and Guatemala.

Honduras suffered the most asymmetrical internal development at the hands of the fruit companies. Capitalist expansion, centred on the vast Caribbean banana plantations, failed to secure capitalist reproduction elsewhere: even today the capital city of Tegucigalpa has no railway and its population is smaller than Honduras's 'second city' of San Pedro Sula. In rural areas anachronistic social relations persisted, the style of politics a paternalistic caciquism.8 Antagonistic political groups were tied to conflicts between the fruit multinationals rather than divergent interests of national capital. The Honduran bourgeoisie, lacking a coherent agraman plan or a solid state apparatus, sought only clientelistic privileges. The locus of political control moved to the basaneras.9

In El Salvador, Guatemala and Costa Rica, one step away from this exaggerated clientelism, a more balanced (though unequal) alliance grew between local landowners and foreign capital: a congruence of economic interests which facilitated us strategic control. In the early 1930s, Central America only sold 20% of its coffee to the United States: 75% went to European markets. But the entrenched dictatorships of that decade sealed relations of dependency with the imperial centre. fo By 1944 the us share of coffee exports was 87%. 11 us postwar industrial expansion brought new demands for raw materials, further consolidating dependency, though permitting diversification of Central America's restricted economic base.

See Mario Posas, 'Honduras at the Crossroads', Latin American Perspectives (1982), pp.

44-6. Though attenuated, this relationship is not dead even today's military strongman, General Gustavo Alvarez, was in charge of Castle and Cook's union-busting at the Las Isletas fruit cooperative. See Steven Volk, 'Honduras-On the Border of War', NACLA Report on the Americas, November-December 1981, p. 34.

10 The 'great dictators' were Jorge Ubico (Guatemala 1931-44), the first Somoza (Nicaragua 1936-56), Hermindez Martinez (El Salvador 1931-45) and Tiburcio Carlas

⁷ See Edelberto Torres-Rivas, "The Central American Model of Growth', Latin American Perspectives (1982), pp 25-6. The best overview of capitalist development is the same author's Interpretación del Deserrello Social Centrocorricano, San José, Costa Rica, 1971.

⁽Honduras 1933-48)

11 Furthermore, coffee at this point accounted for between 70-80% of all regional exports See Jenny Pearce, Under the Eagle, London 1981, p. 25

Integration' and Uneven Development

Strategies for integrated industrial growth were proposed in the 1950s by the UN Economic Commission on Latin America (ECLA), calling for redistribution based on centralized state planning. But the United States, despite the developmentalist rhetoric of the Alliance for Progress, subverted the ECLA model, grasping Central America's potential for the export of transnational capital. Internal market expansion was subjugated to the integration of the five reduced elite markets; planning gave way to a laissez-faire programme of investment incentives. ¹² Far from lessening import requirements, capital goods imports to the manufacturing sector rose and the dominant agro-exporting sector remained dependent on us technological inputs. Industrialization brought an influx of foreign capital. ¹³

The Central American Common Market (MERCOMUN), founded in 1960, embodied an unwritten political agreement between the rigid agrarian bourgeoisie and a dynamic new industrial class: existing economic power, including rural social relations, would be untouched. The most notable 'pact' was in El Salvador, where agrarian pressures were most acute. MERCOMUN's impact on trade flows was swift. Trade between member countries rose by 32% annually from 1961–1968, shifting in favour of manufactured goods. He But though intra-regional trade grew, periphery-to-periphery exchange (with Mexico for example) remained stagnant. The main beneficiary of extra-regional trade was us capital. Us private investments yielded a higher profit in MERCOMUN than anywhere else in Latin America. Direct investment in Guatemala doubled from 1959–1969; in Honduras, us capital controlled 41 of the top 50 industries.

Having set up a free-exchange area to encourage the denationalization of natural resources, finance and industry, it was logical that the us should seek a similar integration of political domination. The Central American Defence Council (Condeca), established in 1964, provided the conventional 'favourable investment climate' and rationalized direct imperialist control over a region whose economic rearticulation revealed political tensions. Political power shifted towards a modernized military apparatus. Condeca allowed the metropolis to standardize weaponry and equipment and centralize intelligence. A purely national concept of security was insufficient: in 1972, with Guatemalan and Nicaraguan support, the Salvadorean military crushed a constitutionalist revolt

¹³ After 22 years of integration, Nicaragua is the only Central American country making locally produced pesticides.

¹⁵ The rate of return on capital in 1977 was 17 3%. Only Colombia, at 13.6%, approached this figure Source, Banness Latin America, 1978, cited in Torres-Rivas, The Control American Model of Growth.

¹² There is a wide bibliography on межсомин. See, siter alsa, two good short studies: David Tobis, *The Central American Common Market—The Integration of Underdevelopment', NACIA Newslotter (1970); and Julio Carranza Valles, El Morcado Courán Controcurer-cano—Un Caso do Integración Departmente, Centro de Estudios sobre América, Havana 1981. A longer econometric analysis is Enrique Delgado, Evalución del Mercado Courán Controcurericano y Deservolo Equilibrado, San José 1981.

^{14 (}Central America: Patterns of Regional Economic Integration), Bank of London and South America Review, June 1979, pp. 340-342, cited in Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk, El-Salvador—The Face of Revalution, Boston 1982, p. 47

protesting electoral fraud. The decision to deprive Christian Democrat José Napoleón Duarte of victory extinguished notions that reformist currents could seize power by legal means. The suppression of reform had become a supra-national concern.

In 1969, war between El Salvador and Hondums showed the ineffectiveness of CONDECA in minimizing inter-army rivalries, and signalled the effective collapse of MERCOMUN. Imbalances had long prevailed within the market: El Salvador, industrializing earlier than its neighbours, regarded Honduras as an overspill area for surplus rural population and a captive export market. In the first eight years of integration, Salvadorean exports to Honduras had increased five-fold. In the aftermath of war, starkly contrasting political consequences became evident. The victorious Salvadorean military saw no obstacle to pressing its plan to turn the country into 'another Taiwan'—a precise formulation by President Molina of original us intentions for MERCOMUN, For Honduras, the war was a fiasco. But with civilian institutions still weak, the trauma did not mean a renunciation by the military of its hegemonic role. The revelation of its mefficiency instead heralded modernization and a technocratization of the officer class. In the absence of a consolidated oligarchy, Honduras's military rulers showed a propensity for autonomy and authoritarian reformist tendencies, stimulated by the Peruvian experiment. Though military-sponsored land reform in 1972 and 1975 foundered rapidly, the young officers did offer a temporary palliative against social polarization.

But the bonapartist pretensions of the Honduran military fell victim to an inherent tendency of the Central American model. Economic supremacy was guaranteed by partnership with foreign capital, but intra-bourgeois competition—in a context of conspicuous dependency—could not be resolved 'freely' in the marketplace. Instead, the contest for hegemony was determined by control over the state apparatus. That temptation brought down the Honduran military in 1975, its president (López Arellano) implicated in the 'Bananagate' bribery scandal. By 1980 corruption had made the entire high command millionaires. ¹⁶

Monopoly and the Debt Trap

The absolute hegemony of the United States over Central America in the 1950s lies at the root of the contemporary disintegration of imperial control. For the integrationist model emerged neither from a crisis in the local agrarian economies nor from crisis in the world market. An externally rearticulated model was grafted on to an agro-exporting sector in expansion, and the big agrarian bourgeoisie, with its flourishing capital base, extended the spectrum of its economic interests. Each of El Salvador's 'Fourteen Families', for example, invested in industry, commerce and finance. Dominant interests reinforced their economic power through joint ventures with foreign monopoly capital, translating this into a creeping seizure of the state, which ceased to represent the totality of the hegemonic bloc.

¹⁶ According to an interview with retired Colonel Mario Maldonado, Tegucigalpa, November 1981

The new mode of accumulation brought enforced economic denationalization: MERCOMUN development was underwritten by USAID and international bankers. Between 1960–1980, the ratio of foreign debt to GDP grew twice as fast as elsewhere in Latin America. From 1970–1978, medium and long-term loans grew six-fold. ¹⁷ The debt trap is illuminated most starkly by the Costa Rica syndrome. There, external debt has leapt to \$4 billion (2/3 public and 1/3 private). Schematically, the cycle is this: To attract foreign investment, infrastructural improvements were essential in the 1960s and 1970s. Since the accumulation levels from traditional exports were insufficient, modernization was financed by foreign loans. But the principal beneficiaries—foreign investors and the comprador bourgeoisie—far from footing the bill, received generous tax exemptions and unrestricted repatriation of profits.

New inflows failed to keep pace with current repayment obligations. The crisis was further accelerated by higher borrowing rates and the enforced switch from public to harder term private bank loans. Repayment was made from currency reserves and new foreign loans contracted for infrastructural projects diverted into meeting balance of payment shortfalls. Costa Rica's financial credibility slumped and an unprecedented monetary crisis matched the crisis of liquidity as the Carazo administration financed continued infrastructural growth by printing money. In addition to 100% inflation, the long-stable colon has been devalued by more than 500%. ¹⁸

Salvadorean economist Emesto Richter argues that 'inflation and external debt do not coincide by chance . . . they express the need to guarantee, through mounting levels of exploitation and economic denationalization, the profits which the previous obsolete model of accumulation can no longer provide. The particular variety of economic diversification stimulated in Central America during the 1950s helps explain the exhaustion of the model of accumulation. Many investors made high profits from the initial industrial reorientation of their surplus, or from traditional modes of agrarian production, but margins were much lower on newly technified, capital-intensive forms of agro-exporting. Profit from ephemeral import-substitutive industry declined sharply after the 1960s. 20

Superexploitation

State repression thus became increasingly necessary to guarantee profits. The expansion into sugar and cotton not only cut back on the area available for domestic staples (com and beans), but heightened the acute

18 See Ramírez and Ramírez, La Crisis Económica Castarricons, San José 1982; and George Black, 'Costa Rica—Into the Eye of the Storm', NACLA Report on the Americas, July—August

²⁰ Oscar Zamora, in CECADE-CIDE, pp 93-105

¹⁷ This mean figure disguises local imbalances. In El Salvador, such loans grew tenfold, and in Costa Rica thirteen-fold. Source: World Bank, World Development Report, August 1980, pp. 136–7. Much useful data on investment, and and debt is contained in James Petras and Morris Morley, 'Economic Expansion, Political Crisis and US Policy in Central America', Contemporary Marxiem (1982), pp. 69–85

<sup>1982.

19</sup> Emesto Richter, 'Comentario a Torres-Rivas', in CECADE-CIDE. Controcamérica—Criss y Política Internacional, Mexico 1982, p. 88.

problem of landlessness. Expansion created a migrant semi-proletanat, most acutely in El Salvador. The displacement of peasants from Pacific coastal lowlands ensured cheap labour for industry in the 1950s, but the economy had no subsequent capacity to absorb dispossessed campennos. Even proletananization was beyond its grasp. Simple demography (population density in El Salvador is ten times that of Nicaragua) left the rural oligarchy no space for reformist manoeuvre, as the landless population soured from 12% in 1961 to 41% in 1975. Today, 60% of rural Salvadoreans have no access to land, and most are excluded from the 1980 three-phase Agrarian Reform. ²¹ Landlessness has become the very kernel of the revolution. In 1932 northern peasant areas were quiescent: today they are the motor force of revolt.

With unemployment affecting 40% of the economically active rural population, industry cannot possibly absorb the flow of rural migrants: only one out of five entering the labour market can find work. Depressed wages and unemployment menace the reproduction of a workforce paid less than the cost of its subsistence. To survive, capitalism resorts to ever grosser levels of superexploitation. The limited possibilities of accumulation coincide with a profound loss of ideological control: for example, the determination to eradicate popular organization and proletarian ideology unites even the murderously divided Guatemalan bourgeoisie. Twelve years have witnessed the effective 'Nicaraguanization' of the Guatemalan state. Just as Somoza's absolutism allowed him new forms of short-term speculative accumulation after the 1972 earthquake, primitive speculation (exploiting the new inflationary spiral) dominates Central America's largest economy: power is monopolized by a new military generation and their civilian allies—the so-called 'bureaucratic bourgeoisic, 22

Multi-billion dollar 'national development' programmes articulate the state to suit foreign interests. And the local partners of petroleum and mineral multinationals have become inordinately rich. The model was piloted by the 1970 Arana administration; by the end of Arana's four-year term, the vision of the material advantages of state power led his successors to a crude electoral fraud. The centrepiece of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie's plan is the Franja Transversal del Norte, a vast swathe of land from Mexico to the Caribbean. Depicted as a land colonization scheme, it is designed to import cheap labour, new roads and airfields and hydroelectric energy to service the transnationals. As land values rocket, the generals appropriate the new agrarian frontier.

Facing this monopolistic juggernaut, which uniformly characterizes Guatemalan generals, Salvadorean oligarchs and Nicaraguan Somocistas, the laws of the free market have little relevance to competitors. The intra-bourgeois contradictions deriving from the Central American

²² True until the March 1982 Rios Montt coup The term 'bureaucratic bourgeoisse' was

coined by Guatemala's Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP).

²¹ For part of the ongoing debate about the Salvadorean Land Reform, see Laurence Simon and James Stephens, 'El Salvador Land Reform', OXFAM Impact Andst, 1980–81, and the exchange between Peter Shiras and Roy Prosterman (architect of the reform) in Food Montor (San Francisco 1981) 20 and 22. Also Raymond Bonner, 'Salvadorean Land Program Aids Few', New York Times, 3 August 1981.

model of capitalist growth have become a grave institutional crisis, whose battleground is the state.

II. Crisis of Hegemony: the Divided Bourgeoisie

During the postwar remodelling of the state, economic diversification brought a corresponding complexity of political and ideological elements, altering profoundly the matrix of the oligarchical state. Within a more intricate alliance, the rural latifundistas suffered a relative decline in autonomous power. While no other society underwent as severe a rupture as Guatemala, major readjustments took place simultaneously in each. In Costa Rica, a modernizing liberal revolt allowed the implantation of bourgeois democracy and a fledgling welfare state; in Nicaragua, two fresh pacts were sealed in 1948 and 1950 between Somoza and the Conservative opposition, guaranteeing free economic operation in exchange for relinquishing political ambitions. In Honduras came the overthrow of the Carias dictatorship and the upsurge of a Partido Liberal tied to modernizing groups; and in El Salvador, four years of contention were resolved in favour of the modernizers by the 1948 coup.

The mechanism for stabilizing bourgeois rule might be for the armed forces to hold power on behalf of the hegemonic economic alliance (the Salvadorean case), or for a consolidated elite to encapsulate both traditional and dynamic interests within a single model of autarky (in Nicaragua). In Guatemala only overt counter-revolution brought stabilization: 1954 stimulated a transitory anti-communist alliance. In all three however, the army gravitated to the epicentre, as guarantors of a social peace which would subsume the contradictions of postwar growth.

The new despotism did not rule by terror alone. In Nicaragua above all, the state assembled a passive consensus, based on the 'peace of the cemeteries' but also on the dearth of popular alternatives. Nicaragua's pro-Moscow Socialist Party, formed in 1944, welcomed Somoza's postwar dispositions. In general, a disastrous complacency viewed the remodelled state as the supplanting of feudalism by capitalism: the Salvadorean CP typically seeing the 1948 coup as 'the beginning of the bourgeois-democratic era, the triumph of the capitalist class over the feudal and semi-feudal landowning oligarchy'. ²³

In fact, modern capitalist development was peculiarly uneven in Central America, its conflicts unresolved until the late 1940s. Archaic culture and ideology were so ingrained that opponents mistook style for substance: a state of semi-feudal aspect had in fact paved the way for capitalist relations. The annihilation of resistance in the 1930s, ²⁴ the minute industrial proletariat and the confused strategies of a fragmentary left movement, all led the bourgeoisie to conclude that it was exempt from reshaping the state to provide channels of populist reaccommodation. Central America never passed through a populist interlude characteristic of the Southern

²³ Armstrong and Shenk, p 38 The crucial and often neglected period of Salvadorean history from 1944–1972 is excellently dealt with by the authors. See especially pp 33–66.
²⁴ What the Central American bourgeoisie most admires about its own history is this swift surgical excision of opposition. It is also what they most cherish in contemporary Chile and Argentina, rather than the rigid application of monetarist theory.

Cone during the 1930s, sandwiched between import-substitution industrialization and the establishment of bourgeois democracy.²⁵

The Death of the Political Centre

The Central American bourgeoisie behaves with obsessive intransigence, the stuff of journalists' Neronic metaphors. In Guatemala, the Lucas García clique—reduced to international pariah status and devoid of domestic legitimacy—presents its defence minister as 1982 presidential candidate and then declares him winner of a blatant electoral fraud. In El Salvador, Roberto D'Abuisson's Arena, emerging as the dominant political force in the 1982 election, promptly overturns the reforms at the core of Washington's strategy of legitimation. In Nicaragua in 1978, with the FSLN still unable to mount a frontal challenge for state power, Somoza rebuffs oas mediators' attempts to salvage 'Somozasmo without Somoza', presiding instead over the destruction of his own party apparatus and praetorian National Guard.

Why? We must offer some better explanation than apocalyptic psychoanalysis. The dialectic between repression and reform essential to any capitalist state has never taken root in Central America. A taxonomy of reform initiatives reveals that each is an exceptional response to a limited conjuncture: (a) directly us-instigated (phases of the Alliance for Progress, the promotion of Christian Democracy in El Salvador); (b) a temporary realignment of forces (the technocratic-military period in El Salvador); (c) the discourse of a subdominant minority within the ruling bloc (as in Nicaragua); (d) a smokescreen to legitimize militarization, in whose favour the duality is invariably resolved (Guatemala under Méndez Montenegro 1966—70; contemporary Honduras); (e) a tactic for substituting selective for aniversal state terrorism (Nicaragua under Schick 1963—67); and (f) demagogic and authoritarian simulacra of reform where genuine social adjustments are incompatible with the existing capitalist model (Guatemala under Ríos Montt, 1982).

Barely qualified us support for dictatorship has granted moderate democratic sectors little operating space. Democratic rights have repeatedly been sacrificed to stabilize a strong political elite—the shock-troops of dependent capitalism—and to secure continued bourgeois class rule and reproduce patterns of accumulation consistent with imperialist interests. The military regimes' incapacity to broaden the base of consensus for their rule led them to liquidate centrist opponents, thereby forestalling any future reformist push from Washington. Thus, the Guatemalans machine-gunned the leaders of the country's two social democratic parties in 1979. A year earlier, Somoza disposed of opposition candillo Pedro Joaquín Chamorro. More than 600 Christian Democrat officials have been butchered by the Salvadorean death-squads.

Centrist reconstitution became impossible for Washington under Carter, and the United States acceded to the 'après mos le délage' rhetoric of the far

²⁵ See the lucid essay by Atilio Borón, 'Latin America between Hobbes and Friedman', New Left Review 130, especially pp. 17–63. Also, Octavio Ianni, La Formación del Estado Populista en América Latina, Mexico, 1975

right, which assumes the aura of incontrovertible anti-communist crusaders. Until the 1970s, Washington might plausibly have rescued reformism, but at critical junctures invariably chose short-term stabilization over apertura. In 1963, for example, the Guatemalan army and the US Embassy refused to contemplate the electoral triumph of Juan José Arévalo, who—given imperialist endorsement—might have stabilized a reformist counter-revolutionary state. So possibly might have José Napoleón Duarte in 1972, holding, as he did, undisputed hegemony within a Communist and Social Democratic-backed coalition. But, once through coup and once through fraud, the army moved towards institutionalizing a state of exception. By 1972, the option of reforming capitalism without overturning existing power structures was dead. The remaining alternatives were consolidation or demolition of the reactionary military state. Most threatening for the United States, militarism did not actually eradicate opposition. On the contrary, the mounting crisis of hegemony stimulated a resurgent revolutionary movement. In El Salvador especially, the genesis of new guerrilla and mass organizations lies in the absence of bourgeois-democratic avenues, with the FPL breaking from the electoralist CP, and the ERP recruiting cadre among disaffected Christian Democrats.26

Honduras and Costa Rica: Partial Reformers

Reform in Honduras came haltingly. Although the Villeda Morales regime—first modernizer of the state apparatus—was overthrown by a 1963 coup and reforms were quarantined by hostile neighbouring governments, internal conditions favoured circumscribed reform, and bourgeois modernization created controlled legal channels for mass mobilization: an initiative which coincided with the implantation of Christian Democracy in Central America—the bourgeoisie's first 'ideological' movement. Above all, the land question allowed some flexibility. Though inequalities of tenure are pronounced (0.2% of farms occupy 22% of cultivable land), concentration was not accompanied by dispossession. There was little pressure on Honduras's vast interior. Agrarian commercialization and the disruption of communal ofides came late. When displacement did occur, Christian Democracy was waiting to channel the peasant movement into communitarian idealism. The military then isolated or killed radical sectors. But in 1962, 1972 and 1975, the military felt able to grant partial agrarian reform without antagonizing agrarian capitalist interests.

The labour movement's leadership was similarly coopted into economism. Organizing several years before the peasants, its dominant ideological current was not Christian Democracy but cold war AFL-CIO unionism. Honduran unions became a test-case for rooting out class conscious sectors while refraining from breaking the movement as a whole.²⁷ With the Liberal and National Parties discredited, the armed forces' ability to consolidate their own power while offering limited concessions allowed them to seek extended backing from the emasculated

²⁷ See Victor Meza, Historia del Monamento Obrero Hondurello, Tegucigalpa 1980

²⁶ On the origins of the Salvadorean movement, see Harald Jung, 'Class Struggles in El Salvador', New Left Review 122, pp. 14-17

mass movement and the national bourgeoisie. In the aftermath of the 1969 War, this alliance proved crucial. The CTH labour federation was under reformist leadership, and the private enterprise gremio COHEP was run by dynamic and progressive capitalists from 1967–1974. This concurrence allowed a tripartite multiclass pact, which Posas calls 'national unity . . . a la colombiana.' 28

Military reformism evaporated after 1975 and the subsequent conservative regimes of Melgar Castro and Paz García brought an incremental wave of class conflict. The military decision to retire from government in 1981 again placated a broad alliance of interests: the army was happy to assume power behind a civilian throne in accordance with imperialist strategy; discontented private capital welcomed return to civilian rule; and popular sectors agreed to elections which represented a significant extension of political rights. The us strategy appeared vindicated by a massive election turnout in November 1981, bringing to power a staunchly anti-communist Liberal over the antediluvian and insipid opposition of the Partido Nacional.

The tendency of geopolitics to sweep Honduras's essentially collateral domestic crisis into the Central American maelstrom has begun to be repeated in Costa Rica. Yet the reasons are different. Honduras, bordering Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, with weak institutional structures but a politicized military, had already been selected by Carter as the new gendarme state to supersede Somoza's Nicaragua. 29 In Costa Rica, on the other hand, it has been the unprecedented gravity of its economic ills in a context of consolidated democracy that has suddenly afforded Reagen new leverage. Costa Rica is the only example in Central America of 'third force' (tercerista) politics—enhanced by the ruling PLN's membership in the Socialist International. 30 Bourgeois reforms swiftly followed independence from Spain and the emergent agrarian model was based on family smallholdings. A relatively widespread and homogeneous capitalist class was able to show considerable flexibility in meeting popular demands. But the accelerated centralization of capital characteristic of the current, profound recession endangers that homogeneity. Police have violently confronted demonstrators demanding wage increases and defensive grassroots organizations have emerged, carrying out spontaneous action against rising bus fares and high rents.

Of course no one at this point would propose that Costa Rica is entering a pre-revolutionary situation. The 1982 electoral turnout confirms that bipartisan electoralist ideology remains powerful and the huge PLN victory suggests that voters blamed poor management by the Carazo

²⁸ Poess, 'Honduras at the Crossroads', p 50.

²⁹ Syndicated us columnist Jack Anderson had reported in March 1980 that talks between the us Army Strategy Director and the Honduran high command had assigned Honduras the role of 'bulwark of anti-communism against the pressures of popular revolt'.

³⁰ Terestrita is a widely misused term in analysis of Latin American political currents. Coined by Haya de la Torre's Apra in Peru, it strictly refers to the search for a nationalist 'third way' between capitalism and socialism. Nicaringua's FSIA Insurrectional Tendency—born as a third force to mediate hostilities between the Prolonged Popular War (GPP) and Proletarian tendencies—argued for a broad alliance against Somoza, and was often referred to as the tenerata faction. Thus the common misapprehension that the Sandinistas were predominantly Social Democratic.

administration rather than the intrinsic debility of the existing system. Can the singular resilience of the PLN party structures survive? Monge has begun his term by displaying the ideological indigence characteristic of the Central American bourgeoisie, seeking relief in appeals to national security and crude redbaiting. In exchange for denouncing 'a massive offensive by Marxist-Leninist totalitarianism, incarnated in Nicaragua', the servile president has been offered us police and counterinsurgency aid: incipient remilitarization of a society which dissolved its army in 1948.31 Meanwhile, the response to debt will be the DAF-sponsored suppression of domestic demand and further stimulation of the export sector. With the devaluation of the colón, industrial wages of \$0.19 per hour are equivalent to Indonesia or Haiti. 32 As social polarities widen, the PLN's mediating capacity will be severely tested; its current hegemony may prove ephemeral. In mr-resolved crises, a social democratic party can abruptly erode if its base is tied to patronage rather than internal democratic process. The Jamaican PNP 18 a clear illustration. 33

The Failed Politics of Mediation

Elsewhere, dominant bourgeois fractions have failed to develop the agencies or practice of mediation between state and society; viewing elections, parliamentary organs, ideological pluralism and even tame trade unions as antithetical to their messianic vision of unmediated rule. Costa Rica's recourse to coercion is a pale mirror-image of the conventional practice of other Central American governments, where the last resort of bourgeois domination has been elevated to a first principle validated by imperialism. Where elections are deemed necessary, the military counts the ballots and selects the candidates. This pattern brought an abundance of strongmen and a corresponding dearth of recognized national leaders. A Somoza is no populist candillo in the Perón mould. Similarly, Central American bourgeois political parties are historically feeble, periodically revived for election purposes only. The practice of conjunctural party-building persists even in crisis: Roberto D'Abuisson's ARENA, rising to lead the new Constituent Assembly in less than a year, is the superlative example. 'Historic' roots in nineteenth century intra-oligarchic disputes breathe spurious life into vapid Conservative and Liberal parties, which subdivide into fragments called 'Traditional' or 'Authentic'. To describe even governing parties—the Salvadorean PCN or the Guatemalan PID—as organically functional would be absurd.

The one exception is Guatemala's fascist MLN, emerging from the unique anti-Communist conjuncture of the 1954 *liberación*, and described by its leader Mario Sandoval Alarcón as 'modelled after the Spanish Falange'.

³¹ El Día (Mexico), 23 June 1982.

³² See Ramírez and Ramírez

³³ See the interesting dissection of the PNP's defeat by Fitzroy Ambursley, 'Jamasca—the Demise of "Democratic Socialism"', New Left Review 128. There are of course numerous differences between the Jamascan and Costa Rican cases. The PLN is Washington's favoured instrument, not the target of sustained destabilization, and Costa Rica's 'Social Democratis' are protagonists—not resisters—of a draconian austenty package. In Costa Rica, no popular (let alone populist) right-wing party exists. Despite these distinctions, I believe the assertion of imminent crisis within a unique instrument of mediation is almost axiomatic

Otherwise, the primary expression of bourgeois interests is the private enterprise confederation: CACIF in Guatemala, COHEP in Honduras, ANEP in El Salvador, and most strikingly cosep in Nicaragua, main vehicle for anti-Sandinista bourgeois mobilization. Nor have the capitalist classes been any more successful in heading multi-class movements. Ruling groups have ceased to base the legitimation of their power on the ritual of class representation. Though elections have been preserved in Guatemala, abstentionism has risen consistently over the last twenty years to more than 60%. The bourgeoisie has retreated into rote anti-communism, sole pretext for the systematic exercise of terror.

Guatemala: the Counterinsurgent State

Mediation between the dominant bloc and the masses was then subordinated to the resolution of secondary contradictions within the hegemonic alliance. In Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and partially Honduras, the bourgeoisie entrusted that role to the armed forces. Since the Cold War, the United States has collaborated zealously in professionalizing the Central American military. ³⁴ The army was the fulcrum of state power in Nicaragua for 45 years, and has been so in El Salvador since 1961.

But Guatemala best illustrates the extrapolated logic of militarism, a weakening of superstructural domination so profound as to leave no option beyond brute repression. The Guatemalan army arose as the coercive arm of the coffee oligarchy, and after the 1954 liberación its organization passed directly to the local us military mission. From these historically specific origins, it became the prototype for continent-wide militarization. The 1963 coup-led by Colonel Enrique Peralta Azurdia prefigured those which swept through Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay and Chile from 1964-1973. Distinct from traditional Latin American golpusmo, which sought momentary promotion of fractional interests or unstable short-term reconciliation of conflict, the new hemispheric 'Guatemalanization' spoke of strategic purpose without time limits, not of preparing a 'return to democracy'. Its self-appointed role was preventive counterrevolution, the salvation of Western Christian civilization against atheistic communism.³⁵ Chile and Argentina perfected what Guatemala had pioneered: the national security doctrine of communism as a cancer in the polity.

This millennial vision has been the only attempt at self-legitimation by the Guatemalan bourgeoisie in 28 years; invested with coherent institutional form since the Cold War. The 1963 coup coincided with the appearance of Guatemala's first guerrilla insurgency and by 1966 the weakness of the existing military machine was manifest. Guatemala became the Latin American guinea-pig for counter-insurgency techniques evolved in Vietnam, helped by hundreds of Green Berets and

³⁴ Between 1950 and 1975, 12,779 Central American trainees passed through us military schools See NACLA, *The Pastagen's Pretigits* (1976) and the periodic bulletins of the Institute of Policy Studies (Washington DC).

of Policy Studies (Washington DC).

35 See Luís A. Costa Pinto, Nacionalismo y Militarismo, Mexico 1969, pp 37-8, and Mano Estéban Carranza, Furrzas Armadas y Estado do Excepción ou América Latina, Mexico 1978, pp. 7-67

large-scale military sales and training programmes.³⁶ With enhanced military power came expansion into economic and political management. The military and the falangist MLN—frequently in alliance—became the most coherent bourgeois social organizations. The army's growing economic management role and its transformation after 1970 into an autonomously powerful economic entity proved contradictory: the open use of corruption, violence and state power as a vehicle for self-enrichment undermined the army's supposed purpose of bringing cohesion to the whole bourgeois formation.

Thus a garrison state emerged—the army invading customary preserves of the civilian state apparatus or even civil society as other modes of hegemonic control broke down. The officer class not only became integral to the leading economic groups through agrarian and industrial ownership, but encroached upon finance (using state entities for legalized embezzlement or creating new institutions like the Army Bank) and took partial control of the mass media, owning newspapers and television stations. These projects seek not massive ideological-cultural reproduction, but merely the recomposition of a minimal alliance (whose composition may shift) around the armed forces.

As ideological control crumbled, state terrorism was upgraded from temporary recourse to institutional practice. Terror rests on an extensive network of local collaborators with bureaucratic and military functions. Death squads are backed by local government agents with administrative and coercive authority at village level: the consistences militares. Behind them is a pervasive web of spies and informers. The Guatemalan model of decentralized repression offers convergence between the economic interests of a dependable nucleus of the rural population and the military-strategic imperatives of the state. But the Salvadorean case is even more extreme. There, the rural paramilitary force orden is nationally constituted, representing the majority of peasants in some areas by dispensing material favours—favourable agricultural credit terms or year-round plantation labour. 38

In the 1960s, when the Guatemalan military retained some semblance of juridical and institutional order, ³⁹ death squads carried out the army's dirty work: extra-official violence would appear a spontaneous holy war against the Communist Anti-Christ. ⁴⁰ Organized by the MLN and recalcitrant members of the private sector, the death-squads' purpose was not simply negative validation of the army (by giving it 'clean hands'), but the positive assertion of civic anti-communist sentiment. But this quasi-ideological facade was undercut by the methods employed. The death squads left their mutilated victums on public display, issued hit-lists,

37 Somoza pioneered the system in Nicaragua through his 'rural magistrates' (pacer de mente).

38 Armstrong and Shenk, p 77

40 Régis Debray, The Reselution on Triel, London 1977, p. 311.

³⁶ See Susanne Jonas Bodenheimer, Guetemala—Plan Piloto para el Continente, San José 1981, and Gabriel Aguilera, 'El Proceso de Militarización en el Estado Guatemaltecò, Polémica, San José, Costa Rica, 1981.

³⁹ On terror, legality and extra-legal 'reasons of state', see Nicos Poulanteas, State, Paper, Societies, NLB/VERSO, London 1978, pp. 76–86.

boasted of their exploits in apocalyptic communiqués and selected appropriately flamboyant names: 'Eye for an Eye', 'The Hawk of Justice', etc. 41 Beyond creating a national psychosis of violence, they proved resistant to central authority. But the army still required the *escuadroms* for tasks beyond its operational capacity, and needed to rein them in more tightly as a function of centralized command. The fiction that renewed slaughter is the work of ultra-right clandestine groups outside government control has been disposed of by an Amnesty International report. 42 Today, the Ríos Montt régime finds itself enmeshed in the same degenerative logic: peasants are press-ganged into 'civil defence militias' and the daily peasant massacres are routinely ascribed to the left. The increasing number of civilian deaths in a bloodier war is useful diversionary ammunition for army propaganda.

III. The Revolutionary Alternative⁴³

The state, reduced to its counterinsurgent essence, assures intensified resistance to its rule. Each new slaughter swells the ranks of the guerrilla forces, and any reduction in repression would have the same effect. Many Salvadorean and Guatemalan peasants have turned to an alternative army, no longer needing to become cannon-fodder. Simple facts of survival dictate this course: joining the guerrillas is no more risky than 'normal' life. Although the creation of liberated zones is not a revolutionary priority, the military in unable to secure key economic areas: Guatemala's Franja Transpersal del Norte is a war zone, and large stretches of the Panamerican Highway—the region's most important transportation artery—cannot be controlled. Physical insecurity translates into financial panic. With each new fission in the bourgeois alliance, the mass movement accelerates the crisis by systematically hitting state infrastructure and local organs of civil and military power.

But can the revolutionary movement seize power? The agony of the ruling class is not by definition terminal. The tendency towards triumphalism lies everywhere. The revolution will not come through irreconcilable secondary contradictions within the capitalist class, but only when the masses—and any bourgeois allies with whom they can achieve anti-dictatorial unity—can eradicate the military apparatus of the state and define an autonomous politico-economic alternative.

The uneven spread of capitalist production relations seems to offer unpromising terrain for class-based revolutionary war. The proletariat remains small—from a mere 14% of the labour force in Honduras to 23% in Costa Rica—and its traditions of organization exiguous. The tertiary sector is bloated, the number of marginades and lumpen high. Many peasants, especially in Guatemala, remain outside the money economy.

⁴¹ Guatemalan sociologist Gabriel Aguilera provides a list of 32 separate death squads in his essay, 'Counterinsurgency in Guatemala', Latin American Perspectivis (1982), pp. 112–3.
⁴² Amnesty International, Guatemala, A Government Programme of Political Murder, London 1981.

<sup>1981.

45</sup> This section of the essay seeks an initial characterization of today's revolutionary movements rather than the systematic theoretical location of their experience. Ideological coalescences and organizational forms vary so much from one country to the next that generalizations are easily refuted.

The major class transformations of the last thirty years have been the emergence of an urban working-class and the massive generation of migrant rural semi-proletarians—as many as 600,000 families in Guatemala alone. Political leadership reflects an equivalent change: during the first decade of integration, urban middle sectors and students; in the 1970s, the industrial proletariat and state employees; now, agrarian labourers and semi-proletarians.

Despite the low level of forces classically considered to have revolutionary potential, the primary characteristic of the new revolutionary movement has been its inventive incorporation of all anti-dictatorial sectors. This original model is the more remarkable because it grows from a history of traumatic defeats, not the radicalization of a domesticated movement. Though imbued with fine intentions about creating an organic social base, the guerrillas of the 1960s were tied to the narrowest conceptions of foquismo.44 Centrist alternatives fed off the ferocity of the ruling dictatorships but also off the catastrophic failures of the left.

Beyond Foquismo

Self-criticism, especially of the separation of political and military work, the party and the foco, became the watchword of the new revolutionaries of the 1970s. The Salvadorean FPL, the Guatemalan EGP and the Nicaraguan FSLN (in its 'accumulation of forces' period) all proposed a prolonged war of attrition, whose initial purpose was to defend the peasantry against state violence before moving on to directly aggressive action. Awakening the masses to the historicity of their situation was the necessary precondition for merging immediate defensive demands and armed warfare, with correspondingly diverse forms of action. Though the strategy initially depended on implanting a small guerrilla nucleus—a foco in the strict geographical sense—Guatemala's EGP noted that 'we were called foquistas and guaristas ... but never considered this a strategic or ideological definition. 45 The same distinction was amplified by FMLN comandante Salvador Cayetano Carpio: If we had to begin with guerrilla warfare, it was a passing stage, part of an overall plan that conceived the people as mastering all means and forms of struggle.'46

Other modalities responded to the mounting repression and superexploitation of labour in the 1970s. Bridging the gap between the local CP's and the new guerrilla nuclei were a broad range of radicalized Christians, independent socialists, spontaneous grassroots formations and former reformist politicians. The 1972 general strike in El Salvador was bloodily

⁴⁴ For a good example of utopian wishful thinking, see Adolfo Gilly's accounts of the Guatemalan MR-13's peasant support in two consecutive issues of Monthly Roser, 1965. On the near-annihilation of the FSLN in Nicaragua, see Gladys Baex, Passanar, Managua 1980 On formulae in general, see the evolution of Regis Debray's thought in Revolution in the Revolution? (1967), Che's Guerrille War (1974), A Critique of Arms (1974) and The Revolution an Trial (1977); also Michael Lowy, The Marxism of Chi Guerara, New York 1973; and Richard Gott's compendious Rural Guerrillas in Latin America, London 1971

⁴⁵ Mario Payeras, Las Días de la Saba, Mexico 1981-a short but extraordinary account of the first days of the EGP. For the equivalent period in Nicaragua, see George Black: Transpb of the People—Sandmitta Revolution in Nicaragua, ZED Press, London 1981, pp. 75-86.

46 Cited in Armstrong and Shenk, p. 104

repressed. In 1973–4 a spirited wave of economistic strikes by Nicaraguan medical personnel and construction workers was followed by a three-year state of siege. And in Guatemala a move from blanket to selective repression brought forth a surge of strike action after 1974, culminating in the 1977 march of striking miners from Ixtahuacán, bringing 300,000 supporters on to the capital's streets.

Faced with state violence, the absence of bourgeois mediation and the consequent expulsion of even economistic working-class action into the extra-legal arena; corporatist objectives were raised necessarily to the political plane. Organizational structures were modified accordingly, to survive in strictest clandestinity. The separation of political and military action, long identified as a theoretical dilemma, now converged in praxis. The process was not without its travails and strategic discrepancies were not easily overcome. While workers' organizations increasingly coupled political work with armed defence, broad sectors clung to exploiting any semi-legal space. The human consequences of open work—the slaughter of Guatemalan trade-unionists and Salvadorean FDR leaders—were tragic, but ultimately instructive. Strike factics were not ruled out and the preparation of a final insurrectional general strike remained a crucial strategic concern. The most dramatic success was the February 1980 mobilization of sugar workers by the clandestine Guatemalan cuc: the first successful joint action of Indians and ladmor, seasonal migrants and permanent agricultural labourers. 47 Otherwise, public demonstrations of any sort were suffocated by violence. In El Salvador, the destruction of all attempts at a public presence during 1980 forced all factions within the FMLN to agree on the need for complete clandestinity. Popular organizations and the underground guerrilla groups converged; their previously autonomous if overlapping structures dissolved. The increasing complexity of military tactics, strategies of class alliance and the impatient demands of a mass base remote from historic leadership schisms, all dictated unity.

What best explains the massive popular incorporation into the new revolutionary organizations is the absence of channels often thought prerequisites for revolutionary action (parties, unions, etc.) and the transformation through repression of defensive demands. The ineffective 'historic' parties of the working class are merely secondary actors: new revolutionary practice has left them ever farther behind. Hundreds of thousands who demand a water-pipe in their barrio or an end to poisonous chemical spraying in peasant settlements, catechists who provide a radical interpretation of the scriptures, mothers who protest the disappearance of their children; these and an infinity of similar atomized demands, lacking even semi-legal channels, are an inchoate but potent force outside traditional political structures.

Stereotypical 'fish-and-water' metaphors of the vanguard-masses dynamic are wholly inadequate to explain the Central American revolution. How to give organizational form to this groundswell? The great lesson of Central America is not simply the need for formal unity: like most Marxist organizations of the late 20th century, Salvadorean and Guatemalan

⁴⁷ Concerned Guatemala Scholara, Dare to Straggle, Dare to Wm, New York 1981, p. 53.

groups have been bitterly divided and aggressively recriminatory. But ideological nuances within leadership were incomprehensible to the mass movement. The question is more what unity means: no longer a sterile, paralyzing debate on programmatic compromise, but uniform willingness to abandon hegemonistic pretensions, deserting all preconceptions over new organic structures. The movement has replaced the party.

The New Popular Organizations

This approach posits a high risk of spontaneity and voluntarism, and appears antithetical to Leninist party tenets. But the revolutionary organizations have established temporal priorities: victory demands a broadly constituted movement. The party corresponds overwhelmingly to the post-insurrectionary period of consolidation. Three years after the seizure of power, Nicaragua has no publicly articulated Sandinista party.

The organizational modalities for seizing power are in form and essence provisional and self-refining. Realism is translated into a passionately anti-dogmatic analysis of international and domestic class alliances. The majority of El Salvador's revolutionary unity has concluded that no reliable allies remain within the bourgeoisie, but that conclusion is pragmatic, not doctrinal. A policy of alliances—taken to its highest form in Nicaragua—is left open, within a context of programmatic convergence which makes no concessions and denies bourgeois hegemony. This course is dictated by the practical need to take power and economic good sense.

The new popular organizations are epitomized by El Salvador's Bloque Popular Revolucionario. Both the Bloque and later parallel groupings (FAPU and LP-28) made explicit that unity would be neither a search for lowest common denominators nor a verticalist imposition of orthodoxy. Above all, internal democracy was to prevail; widely divergent strands of radical consciousness coexisted. Democracy is the masses' main demand, and since the early 1970s it transcends mere bourgeois democratic forms: direct participation is the crux. The us hallucination of the 'democratization of authoritarianism' is central to the imperialist search for legitimacy, most fully articulated by un Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick. Guatemala's revolutionary unity has an alternative and simple hierarchy of demands: First: the right to survival. Second: the right to a decent life (nutrition, health, education and culture). Third: unrestricted participation in planning this vida digna. Fourth: the formal apparatus of democracy.

The Kirkpatrick sophistry is easily refuted on both empirical and

⁴⁸ Torres-Rivas in *Ode Classi* enumerates some of these as 'classical Marxist thought, Jacobin rebelliousness, the will of the petry bourgeois liberal democrat, the sensibility of left Christians and the deep pre-classist batted of marginal elements'

⁴⁹ Above all, in two cases published in *Commutary*, 1979 and 1980, 'Dictatorship and Double Standards', and 'US Security and Latin America'. It was these two *tears do force* of intellectual sophistry which gained Kirkpatrick Reagan's attention in the 1980 pre-election netroid.

period.

30 Interview in Mexico City with member of the Comite Guatemalteco de Unidad Patriotica (CGUP), June 1981.

theoretical grounds. As Boron indicates, 'the last ten or fifteen years have demonstrated that in a significant number of Latin American countries, further capitalist development requires the dismantlement of institutions, practices and values traditionally associated with bourgeois democracy.' 51 Boron refers to the Southern Cone: in Central America, bourgeois democracy was dismantled in advance.

The revolutionary emphasis on the subjective-ideological (without prescribing rigid ideological formulae) explains the fusion between Marxism and the new Christian 'option for the poor' in Central America. The majority of the Catholic Church has offered the peasantry an ultimate vision—not traditional pie-in-the-sky passivity but the conception of an immediate daily struggle shaped by the conscious will. This community-rooted activism has converged with the praxis of Marxist revolutionaries. More, it has endowed the often deficient strategic vision of the left with new substance. This is no opportunistic alliance, but a strategic fusion and a mutual theoretical enrichment. The ideological coalescence embodies lessons for Marxists throughout Latin America. Without exaggeration, we may be witnessing the genesis of a new type of socialist practice.

A caveat however: it is premature to look beyond origins. The Salvadorean masses have endured unquantifiable levels of brutality for three years; the Guatemalans for almost three decades. The popular organizations have depended on their capacity to transcend the anomie which institutional violence may produce and to satisfy embryonic popular aspirations for democratic process. But how long will the 'prolonged popular war' last? Can mass structures withstand another five or ten years?

The Sandinistas defeated Somoza by a creative blend of conventional and unconventional military tactics, ⁵³ and the need for flexibility has been adopted elsewhere in Central America. But the FSLN enjoyed uniquely favourable conjunctural conditions: could they have seized the military power-centre of Managua without the blunders of us imperialism, the mobilization of the bourgeoiste and Somoza's self-destructive tactics?

33 See Marta Hamecker's interview with Humberto Ortega, 'Nicaragua, The Strategy of Victory', Granus (Havana), 27 January 1980.

⁵¹ Atılio Boron, p. 45

⁵² Bibliography on the Christian-Marxist fusion is growing rapidly. For a sample, see the successive volumes on the Church in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala published by the Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, Lima, the review Estudios Contros mericanos from the Universidad Jose Simeon Canas in San Salvador, and the featinating circular, On Marxist Asulysis by Pedro Arrupe S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus, to Latin American Provincials In a key passage on historical materialism, Fr. Arrupe comments 'According to a good number of Christians who are themselves sympathetic to Marxist analysis, even if it does not imply either "dislectical materialism" or, a fortiers, atheism, it nonetheless encompasses "historical materialism" and, in the view of some, is even identical with it. All social reality, therefore, including the political, the cultural, the religious and the area of conscience, is seen to be determined by the economic factor However, historical materialism is most frequently understood in a reductionist sense. Politics, culture, religion lose their own substance and are perceived only as realities wholly dependent on that which occurs in the sphere of economic relations. This view of reality is prejudicial to Christian faith 'Arrupe's text suggests why the Central American Church has converged so readily with a form of Marxism which places such heavy emphasis on the superstructure

53 See Marta Hamecker's interview with Humberto Ortega, 'Nicaragua, The Strategy of

The FMLN and Guatemala's uring have less advantages: they fight a war to destroy the political structures of the state and to build an alternative social infrastructure and dual power outside the metropolis and the necessary base for the final assault on state power. Their capacity to mount offensive operations has risen, but agonizingly slowly. The multidimensional war gains ground, but the final assault is not in sight.

The protracted struggle means permanent re-evaluation of the vanguard-masses relationship. The moment is fraught with dangers. We cannot assume that the embryonic functioning of the popular organizations will last or that its brief inspiration will carry the population through further war. The primary risk is enforced separation between political and military functions: precisely the duality which ruined the Guatemalans fifteen years ago. The leading politico-military organizations in Guatemala and El Salvador were constituted from the outset as armies, capable of destroying the local repressive forces, but also of combatting us intervention. Thousands of Salvadorean cadre have been killed in the last three years. In such circumstances, military concerns and methods predominate. The Vietnamese experience is an increasing reference point. It is impossible to foresee how the enforced rupture between vanguard and base, and the impossibility of public articulation through non-military means, will affect the future struggle. 55

IV. Speak Wildly and Carry a Big Stick: the New Geopolitics

Central America is a crisis of imperialism potentially as threatening as the Middle East. Geopolitical crisis presents itself in the most secure zone of us domination, only two hours flying time from Miami. It reflects less the region's intrinsic strategic value than the yawning disparity between rhetoric and realizable policies, the symbolism of the backyard to a resurgent imperial psyche, and the incoherence of a badly divided foreign policy establishment.

Though us private investment is high relative to Central American GNP, it accounts for less than 1% of us global investment: a billion dollars in 1980. A bipolar vision which blithely disregards the Soviet Union's own international imbroglios and ambivalence towards the Central American struggle routinely recites the Soviet menace to Mexican and Venezuelan oilfields, Caribbean oil processing and transportation facilities and us military bases in Guantanamo, Puerto Rico and the Panama Canal Zone. But beyond these public rationalizations, Reagan's Central American policies respond to a complex interplay of domestic political factors, reflecting Reagan's volatile political base, the nature of the right-wing coalition and the weakness of its public mandate. The sclerotic American far right selected Central America—above all rapid victory in El Salvador—as a test-case for reaffirming international will and Pax Americana. The region offered useful subsidiary objectives: probing the

55 The risk of this division is replicated at the international level with the political-diploma-

tic commission of the FDR.

⁵⁴ An interesting comment on the significance of the prolonged popular war is an interview with John Womack, 'El Salvador and the Central American War', *Socialist Resear*, March-April 1982, pp 9–28

unity of the Western Alliance in an area of low strategic risk, and safely counterposing new foreign policy determinants with Carterist accomodationism. Imperialist reassertion might fulfil Reagan's campaign pledge to exorcise the Vietnam syndrome. ⁵⁶

The administration's dilemma is to execute a foreign policy consonant with far-right rhetoric, but at the same time attuned to declining global power, and able to pacify a badly disoriented electorate lurching from endorsement of Carter trilateralism to chauvinistic trauma over the Iranian hostages. The Central American 'test-case' has proved an unmitigated disaster. With essentially hard-line trilateralist credentials, Haig believed El Salvador was the place to out-radicalize the right. It was to be like 'rolling a drunk'. The Haig led an unprecedented ideological purge of the State Department and Foreign Service, with counter-insurgency and covert action credentials at a premium; familiarity with Central America was a positive hindrance. St

The Sunbelt Looks South

Paradoxically, the virulently anti-Haig New Right had the greatest claim to knowledge of the region. An insufficiently analyzed aspect is Central America's importance to significant sectors of Reagan's unstable rightwing coalition, where single-issue mobilization is vital. Reagan—the California politician—is responsive to the ascendant Sunbelt and West Coast bourgeoisie, first consolidated in power through Richard Nixon. Sunbelt dollars—trailing a multi-faceted nexus of ideological-cultural, political and military involvement—have best characterized recent North American penetration of Central America. This speculative, high profit business (tourism, aerospace and new technology) crystallized in partnerships with the Somozas and Guatemala's 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie'. In turn, influential right-wing lobbies sprang up in Washington, urging us military assistance to the dictators and trying to torpedo Panama Canal legislation.

Texas Instruments set up an assembly plant in the free zone of San Salvador; businessmen commute between New Orleans and San Pedro Sula, financial capital of the Honduran Cambbean; casino and cattle entrepreneurs make rapid fortunes in Guatemala. Mercenary recruitment for Somoza was centralized in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A few miles north—in Santa Fe—right-wing academics drafted the single most important blueprint for Reagan's Latin American policies. ⁵⁹ Thousands

⁵⁷ The phrase is that of ex-Ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White, in an interview with *The Progressia* (New York), September 1981.

⁵⁸ The witch-hunt of the foreign service is fully documented in George Black and Judy Butler, "Target Nicaragus", NACLA Report on the Americas, January-February 1982, pp.

10-12
59 Committee of Sante Fe, A New Inter-American Policy for the English, 1979. On the nature of the Reagan coalition, see Alan Crawford, Thunder on the Right, New York 1980, Robert Armstrong, 'Reagan Policy in Crisis—Will the Empire Strike Back?, NACLA Report on the American, July-August 1981, Mike Davis, 'The New Right's Road to Power', New Left

³⁶ Two helpful studies of contradictions in the administration's Central American policy are Piero Gleijeses, *Tiling at Windmills—Reagen in Central America*, Washington DC 1982; and William LeoGrande, 'A Splendid Little War—Drawing the Line in El Salvador', *International Scienty* (Summer 1981)

of exiled Central American businessmen and their anti-Castro Cuban colleagues have transformed Miami into a two-directional commercial gateway between the usa and Latin America. ⁶⁰ Eastern Airlines, based in Atlanta—hub of the 'New South'—has a flourishing Guatemalan traffic, while Western Airlines handles the deportation of Salvadorean refugees. Links between the Moral Majority—still influential, though now petulantly marginal to Reaganism—and Central America have also grown, centred on heavily evangelized Guatemala. The Rev. Jerry Falwell and other 'electronic church' leaders have offered a multi-million dollar 'lovelift' for Guatemala, whose new president is an elder of the California-based Church of the Word.

This powerful and overlapping set of corporate, political and religious interests have helped place Central America high on Reagen's agenda. His response has been security-related programmes: a reaction to the revolutionary upsurge rather than considered economic policies. But this indicates priority, not excusion, suggesting that the administration sees the Central American situation as a phase of capitalist readjustment—whose precondition is the annihilation of the mass movement—rather than a terminal systemic crisis.

Intercession and Invervention

The left's ability to take power is extraordinarily dependent on external factors: not only us intervention but the attitudes of diverse international actors. Although domestic restraints do intrude upon Reagan's wilder fantasies, the parameters of ruling-class discourse remain narrowly circumscribed. Liberal Congressional opinion adheres to a chimera of Costa-Rican-style bourgeois democracy, which neither social polarities nor the contemporary demands of capital permit.

The revolution will not triumph—irrespective of its domestic strength—unless the mobilization of international counterweight forces blocks us economic and military unilateralism. Signs are encouraging though not conclusive, us policies have provoked deep schisms with real or imagined allies. The abandonment of multilateral initiatives is illustrated by economic strategies. The original 'Mini-Marshall Plan' decreed a joint approach by the Nassau Group, including the United States, Mexico, Canada and Venezuela. Its replacement by the February 1982 Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) coincides with an overall shift away from multilateral regulating agencies towards bilateral aid programmes. But isolationist retrenchment may prove temporary. Contradictions may be accentuated as Reagan's holding operations (the CBI, sustained military assistance to El Salvador) polarize the struggle on the ground and artificially radicalize Nicaragua's cautious transition to socialism.

The CBI offers an atomized country-by-country approach rather than an integrated regional strategy. The choice of Costa Rica, El Salvador and

Resister 128, and Alexander Cockburn et al, The Hadden Electron, New York 1981. An indispensable guide to the background of senior Reagan officials and the interest groups which they represent is Holly Sklar and Robert Lawrence, Who's Who in the Reagan Administration, Boston 1981.

⁶⁰ Lattu America Weekly Report, 29 August 1980

Jamaica as principal recipients of the \$350 million package exposes to one liberal scholar 'the administration's interest in military security, political loyalty and advantages for us firms. 61 There are other obstacles to the plan: tax credits for us transnational investors are unlikely to animate companies whose main criterion for investment is political stability. And one-way free trade arrangements for Caribbean exports will undermine the competitive status of Puerto Rico. 62 CBI aid is designed primarily to meet balance of payments deficits; it does not address the crisis in the reproduction of capital. And the amounts are derisory. Costa Rica's \$70 million will barely compensate for half of 1981's lost coffee revenues. Even these niggardly sums are opposed by a budget-hostile Congress which has set a \$75 million ceiling for any single country. The discriminatory and security-motivated CBI, ostentatiously excluding Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada, contrasts with the 1979 San José agreement under which Mexico and Venezuela supply oil at preferential rates to all Central American countries, a practical convergence between Mexico's commitment to a New International Economic Order and Christian Democratic Venezuela's use of petrodollars to finance the export of ideology.

A wide range of countries have either intercessionist or frankly interventionist goals in Central America. A complex nexus of factors is involved: the global crisis of capitalism; conflict between a laissez-faire USA and a fiercely protectionist Europe: a new European expansionism exhibited in the search for new markets and the inroads of social democratic ideology in traditional us spheres of influence; the subregional competition between emergent powers (Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela, through significant credits and investments, can all influence local events); and the conflictual atmosphere generated by Reagan policies. The principal mediator is Mexico; its activism founded on petroleum wealth, its traditional margin of autonomy from us policy and the flexibility which radical foreign policy affords a unique model of domestic cooptation. 63 The shock-waves of Us hegemonic decline have radiated throughout Latin America. Even before the Malvinas debacle, the Organization of American States was no longer acting as the rubberstamp 'us Ministry of Colonies.' Reagan has been forced into harder formal politicking with his neighbours.

However, complacency is facile. The international correlation of forces in key areas has changed against the Central American revolutionantes since 1979. Autonomy from us dictates does not imply radical sympathies. In the Andean Pact—a major force in neutralizing and isolating Somoza—Ecuador, Bolivia and Colombia have all gravitated rightwards, while Venezuela's position is shifting and ambiguous. The debilitated regimes of El Salvador and Guatemala have secured military and intelligence assistance from Israel and the pariah states of the Southern Cone. Panama, a prominent supporter of the Sandinistas, has kept a low profile since the death of Omar Torrijos. Even Mexican support cannot be assumed

⁶¹ Abraham Lowenthal, writing in Foreign Policy, Summer 1982

⁶² See Mause McAdoo, 'Puerto Rico-Bootstrap to "Initiative" ', NACLA Report on the America, May-June 1982.

⁶³ Olga Pellicer, 'Política Hacia Centroamérica e Interes Nacional de México', in CEGADE-CIDE, pp. 228-32.

unconditionally. The transition from López Portillo to the technocratic conservative De La Madrid comes amidst severe economic recession, diminishing the likelihood of purchasing regional influence with heavy foreign aid, while the purchase of F-5 fighter aircraft portends an increased political role for the historically subordinate Mexican military.

Election Fetishism

With the unfamiliar need to legitimize policies to an international consensus, the United States has resorted for the first time in Central America to promoting parliamentary elections. Between November 1981 and March 1982, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala and El Salvador voted.

Carter's Trilateralism had recognised the need for reaccommodation in the Latin American periphery. But his readiness to jettison human rights rhetoric in the face of perceived strategic interests was nowhere clearer than in El Salvador. Reagan's style may be harsher, but the logic of his policies was prefigured by Carter's final year. Failing in Nicaragua, Carter attempted fresh pre-emptive tactics in El Salvador, endorsing the October 1979 coup. But rather than risk the explosive consequences of genuine reformism, the administration stacked the Military High Command with officers loyal to Defence Minister García. Power passed from the oligarchy to the army's right wing, promoted as an independent political force with autonomous economic interests. Reagan inherited Christian Democrat President José Napoleón Duarte as a legitimizing figurehead for García's rule, and stuck to the package rather than reverting to the oligarchs. But simultaneous militarization and electoralism have had lethal results. Elections were externally imposed, neither emerging from the internal dynamics of the Salvadorean situation nor wrested by the working class as a concession. Giving a passable impression of the sorcerer's apprentice, Reagan has aggravated a three-way bourgeois split: Duarte's legitimizing Christian Democrats are shipwrecked, and Reagan's war has stimulated the emergence of a solidly based neo-fascist force—ARENA. García remains the strongman, but the 'centre' has shifted further right with army-nominated President Magaña (disconcertingly franker than Duarte about his lack of authority).64

Election fetishism and the grouping of El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras and Guatemala into an exclusionary 'Central American Democratic Community' aim to encircle Nicaragua's Sandinista Revolution. While there is continuity between Carterism and Reaganism over El Salvador, over Honduras (as gendarme state) and even over Guatemala (where a policy vacuum characterizes both administrations), the Reagan inauguration brought instant transformation for Nicaragua.

V. Considerations on the Nicaraguan Transition

The Sandinistas carry the heavy responsibility of piloting a unique transition to socialism which fundamentally engages the issue of

⁶⁴ On the Salvadorean elections, see Robert Armstrong, 'El Salvador Beyond Elections',' NACIA Report on the Americas, March—April 1982.

democracy and pluralism. A revolution of extraordinary speed—the dictatorship crumbling in less than two years—is not the most auspicious background for building authentic socialist democracy in the face of sustained imperialist hostility. The FSLN had massive but inchoate popular support, an acute deficit of political and technical cadre, inherited economic devastation, and an imposed coexistence with the non-Somocista bourgeoisie in an alliance in which leadership was only secured through abrupt shifts in the balance of class forces.

The Sandinistas originally attempted a slow, low-cost transition motivated by the desire to avoid traumatic domestic rupture and premature definition. Survival imposed a fragile dialectic between fidelity to the central postulates of the revolution and the need to avoid provocation. The transitional strategy had four pivots: first, a planned mixed economy whose axis was the alliance between the state sector and small peasant and merchant capital; secondly, the political expression of this economic model through institutionalized pluralism (free opposition party activity, ideological and religious plurality, representation of non-Sandinista forces in government); thirdly, permanent mass mobilization as the strategic guarantor of the programme (mass organizations autonomous from the state, worker and peasant militias, nationwide programmes of literacy, health etc.); and fourthly, international projection of the internal politico-economic model (balanced diversification of trade relations, vigorous espousal of the Nonaligned Movement).

The private sector continued to control 75% of the means of production, and free economic operation—within centrally planned guidelines—was guaranteed. 80% of state credits were channelled towards the private sector. But economic guarantees for the capitalist class were not translated into commensurate political power. The Sandinistas directed their dialogue with the private sector towards the business federation cosep rather than the plethora of reactionary and centrist parties, restricting debate to the technical and economic arena. The audacious strategy of encircling the bourgeoisie, forcing it to abrogate demands for political hegemony, was only realistic in the special post-insurrectionary conjuncture: an organically weak, disarrayed bourgeoisie and a Carter administration unwilling to promote dissident capitalists aggressively against the new government.

Initially capitalist dissent was registered in the economic sphere: refusal to invest, production go-slows, decapitalization and economic sabotage. The Area of Public Ownership gradually out-stripped private-sector productivity, with a corresponding increase in working-class mobilization. The periodic stages of rupture between the FSLN and the opposition during 1980 saw a progressive bourgeois disengagement from the machinery of the state: the resignation of business leader Alfonso Robelo from the Junta in April and the walk-out by right-wing groups from the co-legislative Council of State in November were poorly executed face-offs, resolved in favour of the FSLN and accompanied by permanent mass mobilization endorsing government positions. ⁶⁵

⁶⁵ See Weber, Nucreague, pp 79-84; and Black, Trumph of the People, pp 339-343 for two accounts of these events.

The State of Emergency

With Reagan's election, overt class warfare escalated. Us policy now strove to make the Sandinista transition model unworkable by exploiting each contradiction of pluralist coexistence: between the bishops and the 'people's church', between rival trade union federations, within the media, and between the indigenous Miskito population of the Atlantic Coast and the mestico majority. Us tactics ranged from direct financial assistance to anti-Sandinista bodies, through propagandistic assaults to covert action and the threat of direct invervention. 66

Against this onslaught and the daily possibility of invasion, can the FSLN encourage democracy within the mass movement? Can the vanguard avoid bureaucratic rule on behalf of the masses? Democratic advances have been uneven. Excessive democratismo, confronting a bourgeoisie mobilized for survival, appears a luxury. 'Direct' democracy, approbation by acclaim, public accountability, frank verticalism and rudimentary decentralized electoral procedures coexist nervously. But ubiquitous participation is undeniable. The key to democratic consolidation is the autonomy of the popular movement from the state. Though the Right decries the Sandinista mass organizations as Polish-style appendages of an omnipotent, closed party bureaucracy; seeds of permanent accountability and independent class action were sown deeply during the breathingspace allowed by Carter. Government policy, especially in agrarian reform, is increasingly formulated in response to independent mass demands. The May 1982 demand for socialism is pre-emmently the independent expression of proletarian self-consciousness, testimony to that class's capacity to define the precise content of Sandinismo and override the ideological obscurantism of the Right. No timetable for socialism will be decreed unilaterally by the FSLN leadership. The dynamic between vanguard and masses remains fluid and reciprocal.

Recent Reagan administration assaults have galvanized and radicalized the mass movement. The November 1981 approval of \$19 million for covert actions against Nicaragua, terrorist incursions from Honduras and the accompanying propaganda campaign depicting the country as 'totalitarian' and 'expansionist' mark an irreversible watershed. The us will exploit for international consumption the alliance between Sandinista deserter Edén Pastora and businessman Alfonso Robelo, depicting it as a legitimate 'third way' between Sandinismo and Somoza's National Guard.

The imposition of a State of Emergency until February 1983 seems likely to suspend reforms to the media code, a new law regulating political party activities and a programme of private investment incentives. A major economic debate, reminiscent of Cuba in 1963—4, is underway within the FSLN leadership. The acute foreign exchange shortage already dictates priority allocation of resources to state-owned and other key industries. In other words, a harsher, more conventional transition to socialism seems imminent. But this new phase is accompanied by increased popular participation. Autonomous action—consonant with but not subor-

⁶⁶ See Black and Butler, Target Nicaragua.

dinated to leadership orientation—has taken firm root around military defence and in response to the catastrophic floods of May-June 1982. Increased democracy inside a highly disciplined and creative mass movement may be the compensation for abandoning many of the original premises of pluralism within a polyclass alliance of 'national unity.'

Afterword: Prospects

The United States search for reliable allies as bastions against revolution, and the attempt to legitimize these buffer states with democratic credentials, has quickened the internationalization of the Central American war. No development in any one country is free of repercussions in the other four. Solutions—both revolutionary transformation and bourgeois reconstitution—must be sought at the regional level.

Three possible avenues face the Reagan administration, which for the moment has no coherent plan de salida: negotiated settlement on the lines proposed by Mexico; acceptance—as a final contingency—of the 'fall' of Guatemala and El Salvador and the creation of deeply militarized redoubts in Costa Rica and Honduras; or regional war sparked by a Honduras-Nicaragua border conflict. Each option could embrace the partial recomposition of capitalism in the region, under political forms which might range from restricted liberal democracy to corporatist neo-fascism. A résumé of prospects for each country makes clear the difficulty of proposing uniform capitalist solutions:

- * In El Salvador, post-electoral 'national unity' appears unviable. A coup (right against far-right) seems possible, but would rob the regime of legitimacy.
- * In Costa Rica, the prognosis is clearer: a progressive shrinking of the latitude allowed by the present political model, but without this undermining the fundamental stability of bourgeois democracy in the short term.
- * In Guatemala, the army remains the arbiter of political process beneath a bonapartist facade: current authoritarian attempts at reconstituting bourgeois rule will reveal progressively deeper contradictions between the military regime's civilian backers.
- * In Honduras, the process of limited democratization invigilated by a purged and consolidated right-wing military is virtually complete.

If the United States succeeds in rescuing capitalism in part of the isthmus, it will certainly back up that recovery with injections of capital well beyond the trivial amounts of the CBI. Obtaining any equivalent amount of reconstruction aid for their ruined economies is the central threat confronting the revolutionary movements of El Salvador and Guatemala. Neither will enjoy the honeymoon period granted the Sandinistas. Neither western social democracy nor the Soviet Union will pick up multi-billion dollar reconstruction bills. Though the eventual economic potential and political bargaining power of a unified and rationally planned bloc of Central American countries is considerable, any revolutionary victory is certain to face an immediate and dramatic crisis of self-sufficiency.

· August 1982

Narcissism and the Family: a Critique of Lasch

A crucial question for feminists is whether the gendered subjectivity of today really does follow the model of patriarchal authority elaborated in psychoanalytic theory. Juliet Mitchell has probably provided the best-known claim for the validity of psychoanalysis as the key to understanding how feminity and masculinity are acquired. In her account of 'the making of a lady', she argues that Freudian theory still gives the most accurate description of (not prescription for) patriarchal society, and that we ignore this analysis on pain of ignorance. In the present article we want to explore this question from a somewhat different angle, by looking at the work of the American cultural critic Christopher Lasch who, from a position sympathetic to psychoanalysis, argues that the family form it describes has now been largely superseded in late capitalism. His work has elicited considerable feminist criticism and provides a useful perspective from which to assess the broader controversy about psychoanalytic accounts of the family and the construction of subjectivity.

In his recent 'The Freudian Left and Cultural Revolution', Lash re-states and defends against his feminist critics the theses of his two major works: Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged and The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations. 4 He believes that the 'old', 'new' and feminist lefts are all united in clinging to a critique of the patriarchal family. Since he believes this family form has been 'coming apart' for the last century or more, he not surprisingly regards the critique of it as both irrelevant and misleading. His position has provoked widespread irritation and anger among feminists in the United States, as has the sympathy with which it has been received by many (male) sections of the American left. This situation is complicated by the fact that Lasch occupies the unusual slot of being a socialist with a high media profile and book sales in the category of national best-sellers. In Britain, however, his work is less well-known, though increasingly influential in some sections of the left, and in order to engage with the political implications of his recent 'reply' to feminism it is necessary to retrace the main points of his earlier works.

Lasch's Mythic Family

Haven in a Heartless World tells the well-known story that begins 'Once upon a time there was a real family . . .' and, describing the forces of evil that invaded this citadel, ends with a gloomy depiction of misery for all. The narrator is a Marxist: 'The history of modern society, from one point of view, is the assertion of social control over activities once left to individuals or their families. During the first stage of the industrial revolution, capitalists took production out of the household and collectivized it, under their own supervision, in the factory. Then they proceeded to appropriate the workers' skills and technical knowledge, by means of "scientific management", and to bring these skills together under managerial direction. Finally they extended their control over the worker's private life as well, as doctors, psychiatrists, teachers, child guidance experts, officers of the juvenile courts, and other specialists began to supervise child-rearing, formerly the business of the family.'5

Lasch sees the family as the last stronghold of the realm of the private, invaded by public policy and the increasing manipulation of the state. Family relations, taking place in an ethos of consumerism are now indistinguishable from the social relations of the factory and market-place. Parental authority has been replaced by a definition of parenthood as merely the obligation to provide financial resources for the commodities desired by acquisitive and individualistic housewives and children. He sees advertising and consumerism as a key aspect of the 'socialization of reproduction': 'Like the helping professions, it undermined puritanical morality and patriarchal authority, subtly allying itself with women against men, children against parents.' Relations within the family now serve only self-interest and are combative and mercenary. Allied to this is

¹ Psychoanalysis and Feminism, Harmondsworth 1974

² New Left Review 129 (September/October 1981)

New York 1974

⁴ New York 1979

⁵ *Harm*, pp. xiv–xv.

^{6 /}hd, p 19.

a devaluation of romantic love, a distaste for passion, and the reduction of marriage to one of a series of 'non-binding commitments.'

Lasch describes these developments in ironic, indeed bitter, terms. He regards the present family, with its Dr Spock-dependent mother, anti-disciplinarian father and children who never face the rigours of Oedipal rivalry, as both a psychic and social disaster. The family, he argues, is principally an agent for the socialization of the young—indeed none of its supposed 'functions' can be separated from this goal. Socialization takes place through the internalization of parental authority and values, the father providing the bedrock for the conflict that must necessarily precede the development of individual conscience, and the mother's love offering a glimpse of values that transcend this present harshness. The family, in this process of socializing the individual into acceptance of social values, thus mediates between the individual and society, between instruct and culture. He regards 'the irreconcilable antagonism between culture and instinct' as the most important insight of Freudian psycho-analysis. 'Without this insight', he argues, 'it becomes impossible to understand how the family mediates between the two or to understand what happens, psychologically, when the socialization of reproduction weakens or abolishes this mediation.'7

What does happen, 'psychologically', is that the conflict played out in the paradigmatic family described by Freud 1s indefinitely deferred. Lasch sees the Oedipal crisis as the foundation for the development of responsible adulthood, and argues that the evasion of it made possible by the decline of parental authority leads to an infantile and narcissistic personality structure. (As we shall see later, this is predicated upon the boy's rivalry with his father and implies that the increase of narcissism entails a general feminization of the personality.) He maintains that the processes described by Freud-socialization through rivalry and guiltwere actually losing power at the moment Freud brought them to light. They were characteristic of a bourgeois patriarchal family form already losing ground. Evasion of generational conflict, however, is not the same as resolution of it and Lasch argues that it lingers on in a more primitive form. The child whose father is absent, or refuses to exert his authority, will never overcome fantasies of punishment and fears of retribution but will simply project these onto an unspecified future. Deferred retribution represents the price paid for undeferred gratification.'8

This fear of deferred retribution is projected onto the social world beyond the immediate family. Today's narcissists have an attitude of sullen resentment and resignation to an increasingly invasive set of social policies and an increasingly totalitarian state. Lasch conceives of the family as a mediator—indeed a buffer—between the individual and society; and as it is weakened, so we lose the restraint but also the idealism it engendered. We become vulnerable to new forms of domination from consumerism and the state.

These themes are elaborated in Lasch's later, more popular, book, The

⁷ *Pul*, p 77.

[™] II p. 189.

Culture of Narcissism. Children grow up unpunished by their parents and project their fears and fantasies of paternal retribution onto the arbitrary violence of a bureaucratized society. Agencies of social control adopt a permissive and therapeutic rhetoric that effectively disables authentic judgement and moral authority. Such a culture celebrates media figures and encourages narcissism and infantilism in everyone. The weakening of familial authority erodes the distinction between public and private and exposes all to 'enlightened' expert guidance on personal relations. Permissiveness, therapy and feminism all represent examples of a 'flight from feeling'—an evasion rather than an engagement with the demands of sexual relationships. These tendencies Lasch regards as both deleterious and final: Is is too late, however, to call for a revival of the patriarchal family or even of the "companionate" family that replaced it. The "transfer of functions", as it is known in the antiseptic jargon of the social sciences in reality, the deterioration of child care has been at work for a long time, and many of its consequences appear to be irreversible.'9

Lasch's description of the bourgeois patriarchal family has an elegiac tone and his evident regret at the passing of this authoritarian institution has proved unpalatable to many. It is not, perhaps, surprising that feminists should react adversely to a writer who uses the adjective 'patriarchal' to convey approval rather than criticism. What is surprising is that Lasch's position should have secured, despite its blatant anti-feminism, the credence that it has on the left. This in itself belies his insistence that feminism and the left are united in a mindless attack on the family and indeed it points to a major source of conflict between many feminists and socialists. Before considering the feminist critique of Lasch's work, however, we want to raise some rather different points for discussion.

As we are going to disagree with Christopher Lasch's history, analysis, politics and morality we should perhaps point to some areas where we find his ideas provocative in the sense of fruitful. Undoubtedly he is right in his identification of the real material and emotional issues so often ignored in academic work as well as in political rhetoric on the family and human relationships. We share, if you like, the humanism of his concern for real needs and we share his insistence that the sphere of personal and psychic relations is of crucial importance for socialists. While we disagree with his answers we endorse the salience of the question that is his starting-point: 'Most studies of the family tell us everything except the things we most want to know. Why has family life become so painful, marriage so fragile, relations between parents and children so full of hostility and recrimination?'10 In his exploration of this issue Lasch exposes with brilliance the idiocy and hypocrisy of much contemporary thinking. The oxymoronic notion of a 'non-binding commitment' is subjected by Lasch to the derision it fully deserves.

It needs to be said also that Lasch's discussion of consumerism in relation to the family places a welcome emphasis on a strangely neglected dimension of family/household organization and ideology. Although the notion of the modern family as a 'unit of consumption' has been a staple

Narraman, p 190

¹⁰ Harm, p xvl.

truism in sociology it has been somewhat displaced in more recent, politicized debates on household production. Lasch writes very interestingly about advertising, the fabrication of leisure and the mercenary and acquisitive dimensions of family relations. He adopts a refreshingly crisp class analysis of the beneficiaries of what he considers to be the degeneration of family and individual integrity. 'Most of us can see the system but not the class that administers it and monopolizes the wealth it creates. We resist a class analysis of modern society as a "conspiracy theory". Thus we prevent ourselves from understanding how our current difficulties arose, why they persist, or how they might be solved.' Although he tends to present consumerism as an imposition as the family by the corporate state—whereas we would see familialism as a central component of consumerism—we strongly endorse his insistence on this question.

Lasch's conception of the history of the family is, however, extremely tendentious. Quite independently of any evaluation of the psychic and social status of the family form mourned by Lasch we can raise questions about 'the family beseiged' that he invokes. In the first place Lasch's conception of 'the family' is quite explicitly the bourgeois model of the family characteristic of nineteenth-century capitalism. As Mark Poster has pointed out, this is only one of various family forms and is quite distinct from those of the aristocracy, the proletariat and the peasantry. 12 Although Lasch emphasizes the precarious existence of this bourgeois family form he nonetheless tends to fall back on it as an ideal-type or plumb-line against which all else is measured. In the absence of a rigorous specification of the period of existence—let alone class and cultural boundaries of this type of family it tends to take on a universalist and essentialist character in Lasch's accounts. As works of cultural history. these books are surprisingly vague and lacking in details of time and place. If Lasch is keen to point to the moment at which the family lost its force, it is in order to show us how it eluded the grip of psychoanalysis and the Frankfurt School by disappearing just as they pinned it down. 13 But he is less keen to document it in the moment of its prime or to show when it arose and how long it lasted. This family appears in Lasch, as does the family of the ancien regime invoked by Donzelot, as a representation of what went before: a representation that seduces us into the mythology of the 'real' family.

Lasch hypostatizes the family as (prior to its degeneration in the culture of narcissism) the haven of affect and the point where cash relations do not enter. It is the last thing that capitalism got hold of, conjured up with all the emotions usually reserved for the expression of power at some programme of socialist nationalization. ("They will be wanting to nationalize sex next".) "The spirit of economic rationality, writes Lasch, 'had become so pervasive in modern society that it invaded even the

¹¹ Narcumm, p. 176

¹² Critical Theory of the Family, London 1978

¹³ Resch, Fromm, and the Frankfurt School analysed the authorization family at the moment of its demise. They showed how the family instills the "capacity for suffering"—for experiencing injustice as religious guilt—at the historical moment when guilt, as a means of social control, became obsolete." (Harm, pp. 90–91, see also p. 180)

family, the last stronghold of precapitalist modes of thought and feeling.¹⁴

In what sense the family is a stronghold of precapitalist thought and feeling is never explained, and indeed it would be difficult to do so. This kind of clichéd assumption recurs frequently in Lasch's work, never explained and never defended. Inevitably some of his assumptions universalize culturally specific phenomena. The ideal of passionate romantic love is referred to in passing on several occasions as 'transcendent', but this claim is never substantiated. Indeed it is characteristic of Lasch that his implied desiderate of sexual relations emerge only from the tom of his account of people with whom he disagrees. Monogamy, for example, might not be explicitly recommended, but a critique of monogamy will be described in such a way as to make it sound silly.¹⁵

The Family versus the State

Although Lasch is in some respects explicit about his values, he implies rather argues the most conservative of his positions. This emerges in his treatment of the relationship between the family and the state. A substantial element in his thesis that the family has been taken over by the mushrooming guidance agencies of the corporate state. His lengthy accounts of this process are remarkably consonant with those outlined in The Policing of Families 16 and it comes as no surprise to see that the American edition of Donzelot's book has an adulatory jacket-blurb by Lasch. They concur in diagnosing an unhealthy alliance between women and the plethora of agencies that disguise state intervention in the family as 'expertise'. In a typical passage of covert support for authoritarianism Lasch writes 'Enlightened opinion now identified itself with the medicalization of society: the substitution of medical and psychiatric authority for the authority of parents, priests and lawgivers, now condemned as representatives of discredited authoritarian modes of discipline.'17

Both Lasch and Donzelot express considerable concern at the medicalization of crime and the pervasiveness of 'therapeutic justice'. These developments, exemplified in the case of the juvenile court where the defendant is judged by probation officers, psychiatric social workers and paternalistic magistrates, tend to strip the prisoner of traditional rights in the process of removing responsibility for crime. Lasch complains that courts could then pry into family affairs, remove children from 'unsuitable' homes and invade homes to supervise probation. Donzelot, too, waxes indignant on the abrogation of the rights of the accused in the therapeutic model of juvenile justice. ¹⁸ There is, of course, genuine cause

¹⁴ Ibd, p. 36.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 147 'Joining Mead, Fromm, and other celebrants of "community" he [Philip Slater] proposes to substitute a diffuse, easygoing, non-demanding warmth for the passion that fasters neurotically on a single individual, "looks backwards, hence its preoccupation with themes of nostalgia and loss", and is "fundamentally incestuous"."

¹⁶ New York 1979

¹⁷ *Ibal*, p. 100.

¹⁸ See Pelung, pp 106-7

for concern in, for example, the control of prisoners with drugs and the various other abuses of the system with which we are familiar. But these are not the real causes of Lasch's and Donzelot's dissent: they object to the fact that the juvenile justice system has usurped the authority of the family, by which they mean the authority of a father over his children. It is the abrogation of the rights of the father, not those of the child, that draws forth their critique of juvenile courts. ¹⁹

The question of justice is a significant one, since it symbolizes the allocation of authority. Lasch and Donzelot both imply that therapeutic justice is to be compared unfavourably with the system of confrontation between accuser and accused. Neither of them acknowledge the brutality and injustices of the latter system, it is simply invoked as one with more authenticity and one that treats individuals as responsible for their actions. The position taken is, we believe, an odd one for socialists. Systems of social justice are surely better than the system of individual confrontation, largely based on notions of property and contract, characteristic of bourgeois democracy. If 'therapeutic justice' is to be criticized it should be with reference to systems of genuinely social control such as have existed in the past or to ideals of popular democratic justice.

Critiques of the state, and of state 'intervention' in the family, can be made from various points of view. The position taken by Lasch adopts the point of view of individualism expressed through the notion of the authority of the father in the family. This is not as progressive as an anarchist-socialist critique of the state, let alone a socialist commitment to collective decision-making and control. It is, of course, important to recognize that Lasch's arguments apply specifically to the socialization of children within a capitalist society. He rightly sees the capitalist state, and the agencies and ideologies of welfarism within that state, as motivated by the need to secure social control as well as promote consumerism. Yet he ignores an important contradiction in the constitution of the welfare state: that it also represents an achievement of working-class struggle and a degree of collectivization of care. As Eli Zaretsky has pointed out Lasch portrays the welfare state as the creation of middle-class reformers and professionals, ignoring the active initiative of the urban working class and the poor in bringing about reforms'. 20 Obviously socialists can only see the social provisions of the welfare state, be it in Britain or, even more so, in the United States, as an extremely pale and inferior version of what we would wish to see in socialism. But one lesson we have learnt from the present era of savage cuts—often referred to in Britain as the 'dismantling' of the welfare state—is that the social provision of facilities, however inadequate, must be defended against the attempt to push back into the family (more accurately, onto women) the care of those who cannot care for themselves.

²⁰ Zaretsky also comments on the degree to which some feminists in seeing the welfare state as a creation of men have ignored the role of feminists in its orgins. (See *ibid*, pp. 191-2)

¹⁹ Eli Zaretsky, taking a sharply different approach, comments that the juvenile courts tended to *protest* rather than replace the private family. See "The Place of the Family in the Origins of the Welfare State" in Barrie Thome and Marilyn Yalom, eds., *Rathenking the Family*, New York 1982, p. 213

In this context Lasch's approach is very different from a socialist position which seeks to struggle for improvement and democracy in social provision. It is as if his hostility to the present forms of social provision and collective responsibility for children lead him to the equation that the social is necessarily invasive and totalizarian. He repeatedly associates these elements, always contrasting them unfavourably with the familial and the individual. As socialists we would want to argue for the increase of social responsibility for the ways in which children are cared for and socialized, yet for Lasch it is a matter for regret that the socialization of children has slipped from the grip of the individualist family.

Lasch's romantic view of the psychological strengths derived from Oedipal conflict underly his general support for authoritarian styles of socialization. This arises in his fascinating discussion of the legal action taken by the state of Wisconsin in the attempt to remove children from the religious restrictions of Amish society by having them compulsorily educated in state schools. Lasch describes the argument made by the dissenting judge Douglas against the right of Amish parents to self-determination of their own children as sentimental liberal humanitarianism: 'The argument is sentimental above all in its assumption that the state can spare the child who does decide to break from his parents' traditions the pain, suffering, and guilt that such a break necessarily exacts—the confrontation with which, however, constitutes the psychological and educative value of such an experience. In true paternalistic fashion Douglas would smooth away the painful obstacles to the child's progress, forgetting that progress consists precisely in overcoming these obstacles. 21

The implications of this point of view should be noted, though they are never developed by Lasch. It is no coincidence that the suffering and guilt extolled here as conducive to the development of psychic strength—conceptualized as the equivalent of moral fibre—are the product of narrow and archaic religious dogma. Are we not being asked to believe that the crippling guilt induced by a socialization through the doctrines of Roman Catholicism (for example as described by James Joyce in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man) leads to advantages denied those exposed meiely to nominal Anglicanism? That the powerful residues of guilt in those who have broken from an Orthodox Jewish upbringing strengthen rather than deform? Without ever defending the merits of any particular religious belief, Lasch tends to side with the religious against the secular. A typical example of the insertion of covert pro-religious views occurs in Lasch's discussion of the psychoanalyst Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel. Since Lasch's main thrust in this passage is to demonstrate (in a patronizing way) how her work has been misunderstood by feminists claiming to appropriate it, the reader may be forgiven for engaging with the main argument rather than with the remarks slipped in on the question of religion. Lasch suggests that, 'incidentally', Chasseguet-Smirgel may help to explain 'why the death of God has not made men more self-reliant and autonomous. On the contrary, the collapse of religious illusions has only prepared the way for more insidious illusions; and science itself, instead of serving as an agency of general enlighten-

²¹ Narrussum, p. 382.

ment, helps to reactivate infantile appetites and the infantile need for illusions by impressing itself on people's lives as a never-ending series of technological miracles, wonder-working drugs and cures, and electronic conveniences that obviate the need for human effort.'²²

It could well be argued that belief in God comes fairly high on the scale of 'insidious illusions' and certainly it is responsible for more suffering in the world's history than optimism, however 'infantile', about the capacities of science. It might be 'infantile', if one were suffering from an incurable disease, to hope for the discovery of a 'wonder-drug' to cure it, but such a hope would be considerably more rational than the illusion that God would be much help. Although we do not imply that Lesch is 'guilty by association' with religion we do feel it is relevant to observe the range and variety of conservative elements that he appears to endorse. His arguments are presented, and received, as iconoclastic within a socialist tradition that he characterizes as dogmatically opposed to the family. At the end of The Culture of Narcissism he calls, in a rare moment of optimism of the will, for the creation by citizens of 'communities of competence' and refers to 'traditions of localism, self-help, and community action that only need the vision of a new society, a decent society, to give them new vigour'. 23 The call, however, is too little and too late. His whole analysis of family and state rests on a reactionary defence of the bourgeois, patriarchal, Christian form of the family, which leads to a distorted and exaggerated account of historical change. Furthermore it is an analysis so shot-through with individualism that the 'vision' of a new society so unconvincingly evoked at the last moment can inspire little confidence.

Lesch's Dismissal of Feminism

If there is doubt as to the purchase of Lasch's work on the socialist tradition there can be little confusion about its combative stance in relation to feminism. An obvious indication of the conflict can be seen in Lasch's total silence on the oppression of women in the patriarchal family he so admires. The work of the Frankfurt School, to which Lasch is selectively indebted, provides a salutary contrast on this point: 'In the crisis of the family the latter is now presented with the reckoning, not only for the brutal oppression which the weaker women and, still more, the children frequently had to suffer at the hands of the head of the family during the initial phases of the new age, but also for the economic injustice in the exploitation of domestic labour within a society which in all other respects obeyed the laws of the market.'24 Lasch is concerned only with what he considers to be the strengths of the bourgeois patriarchal family form, and the brutality, oppression, injustice and exploitation to which the Frankfurt School refer are striking absences in this account.

Lasch himself indentifies feminism—along with sexual separatism,

^{22 &#}x27;The Freudian Left', p 32.

²³ Narraman, p. 382.

²⁴ The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, Aspects of Sociology, London 1974, p. 137. For a feminist critique of Lasch's failure to make this point, see Wini Breines, Margaret Cerullo and Judith Stacey, 'Social Biology, Family Studies and Anti-Feminist Backlash', Feminist Studies 4 (1978)

drug-taking, suicide, celibacy, promiscuity, the cult of 'cool sex' and the rise in single-person households—as part of today's 'flight from feeling'. The culture of narcissism and the dependence on 'experts' have led to an increased inability to confront sexual tension and antagonism. Lasch, in the following passage, seems to suggest that what he calls 'the routine depreciation of the opposite sex' is the best we can hope for: 'Feminism and the ideology of intimacy have discredited the sexual stereotypes which kept women in their place but which also made it possible to acknowledge sexual antagonism without raising it to the level of all-out warfare.' Lasch's goal is that we should 'live more gracefully' with sexual antagonism rather than raise the stakes of the conflict or slide into passionless androgyny.

Of course, it is more difficult to be 'graceful' about antagonism when one is on the receiving end of a power structure. The principal point of conflict between Lasch and feminism is that although he appears to be treating gender relations in an objective way his standpoint is utterly and exclusively masculine. It seems extraordinary that someone whose focus is so centrally placed on gender should so repeatedly refer to 'boys' when he speaks about children. This can be seen in his more sociological discussions, such as where he talks of the family pattern of the propertied classes and in his psychoanalytic interpretations. ²⁶

Oedipal socialization and rivalry with the father are central to Lasch's analysis and yet he fails to engage with the crucial question of the extent to which this model illuminates the psychosexual development of girls. Freud's discussions of female sexuality and psyche are often regarded as less satisfactory than his account of masculinity, and indeed he commented himself upon the problem. Those who accept many dimensions of Freud's approach may find his account of female sexuality less resonant or convincing. A major claim for psychoanalysis 18, obviously, that it privileges questions of gender to a degree and in a manner found very rarely. At the very least, then, a challenge to Freud's account of femininity is no mere local dispute, it must be a challenge to the entire corpus. Yet Lasch engages with this challenge by seeing it merely as a vehicle through which the 'cultural' attack on Freud could conveniently be made. Lumping together those who sought to explore the psychology of women—from Karen Horney onwards—with those who argued as anthropologists for a cultural rather than a biological reading of Oedipal socialization, Lasch creates a category of 'revisionists'. Of course no one would disagree that the culture/instinct argument is profoundly important in psychoanalysis. But for Lasch to use this as a means for the complete marginalization of the feminist challenge simply demonstrates his fundamental unwillingness to take the question seriously.²⁷ No doubt he is to be congratulated for mentioning it at all.

In this context it is interesting to note that in his recent article Lasch does not engage with the arguments of his feminist critics. Stephanie Engel, in

²⁵ Narrumum, pp 331-2

²⁶ Ibul, pp 371-2, and Hams, pp. 182-2.

²⁷ It is easy to see why the psychology of women became an issue seemingly made to order for the purpose of a "cultural" refutation of Freud. ... Much more is at stake in this dispute than the psychology of women '(Hasta, p. 76)

the most cogent direct response to Lasch, observes that "... in a muffled form, the sense of narcissism as emasculation underlies Lasch's despair over the decline of the reign of Oedipus and the emergence of narcissistic man'. ²⁸ Engel traces this back to the history of Freud's distinction between anaclitic object choice (love for someone different from oneself) and narcissistic love for an object resembling oneself. Engel sees the marginality of women in psychoanalytic theory as a consequence of the fact that for girls as well as boys the mother is the primary and formative object choice: "That women must choose to love an individual of the opposite sex when their primary love relationship would prepare them only for narcissistic object relations was a problem Freud never resolved. ... traits such as dependence, immaturity, rigidity, and masochism have been conflated under the analytic umbrella of "narcissism", the psychological trademark of femininity."

Engel argues that Lasch borrows the more pejorative of Freud's connotations of narcissism and, combining them with an idealization of the bourgeois family, arrives at a stance that systematically devalues women's experience as well as feelings of attachment, mutality, identification and relatedness. Lasch responds to this by offering to call the culture of narcissism the culture of the uninhibited ego-ideal. Principally, however, he re-states his original thesis rather than replies to the criticism. Patriarchy, the family and the father are a 'pseudo-problem' that merely divert the attention of the left from the real problem of the corporation and the state. Feminists are wasting their energy in a struggle against an already toppled patriarch and in the meanwhile the despotism of industrial consumerism reigns unchecked.

Towards a Revaluation of 'Mothering'

Whatever the disagreements between Lasch and a critic such as Engel, there emerges some consensus on the point that the processes of socialization through patriarchal authority—as described by Freud—are not eternal. Lasch's account of the patriarchal family does, precisely, offer a prescription for socialization rather than a description of the current position. A recognition of the relative vulnerability and mortality of patriarchal power underlies the increased interest in recent years, in both feminist and socialist thought, of relations between women and the exploration in particular of mother-daughter relationships.

Nancy Chodorow, Dorothy Dinnerstein and Jessica Benjamin have, in rather different ways, contributed to this approach. ³⁰ Although we do not wish here to examine their arguments in detail it is important to note their significance. One way of describing this would be to say that they point to the usefulness of a version of psychoanalysis that did not unduly emphasize and valorize Oedipal conflict. The internalization of the father's authority at the Oedipal moment is the basis of the boy's placement in a patriarchal order and the weakness of the configuration for

29 /kmL pp 87-88.

²⁸ Femininity as Tragedy', Seculist Review 53 (1980), p. 88

³⁰ Chodorow and Dinnerstein, although frequently referred to together, show marked differences of approach. See Nancy Chodorow and Susan Contratto, "The Fantasy of the Perfect Mother", in *Rathinking the Family*, p. 72, fn 13.

girls is the source of women's lesser inner-direction, responsibility and guilt. But to emphasize the consequences, for both sexes, of Oedipal struggle is to pay less attention to pre-Oedipal relationships. In particular, of course, it leads to an emphasis on the patriarchal authority of the father at the expense of a proper consideration of the primary relationship between a child and its mother.

This primary relationship, though not without conflict, is characterized by nurturance and attachment. Writers of this 'school' tend to stress that the later object-choices of the girl cannot be so decisive as they can be for the boy: he can replicate the primary relation with the mother in adult heterosexuality whereas she is likely to remain at a fundamental level more torn between (heterosexual) object-choice and an attachment to relations that reproduce the intimacy and nurturance of the early bond with the mother. An approach of this kind is very different from the classic Freudian tradition. It endorses many of the basic points, but sees Freud's stress on patriarchal authority and Oedipal socialization as the product of a particular family form in a specific period of history, bounded by class and culture.³¹ It emphasizes the positive value we should attach to early mutuality and union and tends to downplay the significance—descriptively in the present and normatively in the future -of paternal authority. To stress the formative character of the mother-child relationship enables a revalorization of less competitive and more nurturant relationships in general and, in particular helps to explain the history and continuance of close relations between women in later life.

In this sense the approach developed by Nancy Chodorow and others represents both an analysis, or explanation, of the strengths of relationships not necessarily sexual, but emotionally significant between women and also an insistence that the values and psychic content of them should be asserted against those deriving from patriarchal Oedipal socialization. Lasch considers that the project of the 'new psychoanalytic feminism' is '... the effort to uphold narcussism as a theoretical alternative to possessive individualism....32 More accurately we can say that primary narcissism is here to some extent rehabilitated and given a positive rather than exclusively negative inflection.³³ In this sense the focus of this particular approach is to argue, within a general psychoanalytic perspective, for the revaluation of 'mothering'. Jessica Benjamin argues that the revolt of feminism springs from an indentification with others rather than from the aggression generated by patriarchal socialization. It is this image of revolt springing from mutual recognition and nuturant activity which may guide us in our struggle against instrumental

³¹ It is paradoxical, though welcome, that feminists have paid more attention to the class boundaries of psychoanalytic theory than some others. See Jessica Benjamin, 'Authority and the Family Revisited', New German Critique 13 (1978), pp. 52-3.

^{32 &#}x27;The Freudian Left', p. 31

³³ Engel makes it clear that she seeks a reconciliation rather than the one-sided position that Lasch attributes to feminism. If one validates the autonomy of the two agencies of morality, the super-ego and the ego-ideal, not subsuming one under the other, one need not choose between the poles of terror and infinite regression. The super-ego, heir to the Oedipus complex, insists on reality and the separation of the child from the mother, whereas the ego-ideal, heir to the state of primary narcissism, restores the promise of the imagination, of desire, and the fantasy of re-fusion' ('Femininity as Tragedy', p. 101)

rationality toward a society without the father.'34 Nancy Chodorow concludes that we also seek a world without the mother: 'Any strategy for change whose goal includes a liberation from the constraints of an unequal social organization of gender must take account of the need for a fundamental reorganization of parenting, so that primary parenting is shared between men and women.'35

Chodorow's discussion of mothering recognizes the possibility—in her view, the desirability—that mothering need not be exclusively associated with women. She describes the psychic dynamic by which socialization leads to women mothering, but argues that the generational cycle can and should be broken as men share the role of 'mother'. This raises, of course, the controversial question of whether the psychic content of mothering rests on a cultural or a biological base. Chodorow's insistence—to put it crudely—that men could 'mother' is bound to encounter the obvious rejoinder that this will be limited by the biological determination of the mother-child relationship. This stance is usually thought of as a classically reactionary position, whether expressed from a feminist or anti-feminist point of view. The debate about biology, so much a feature of psychoanalytic accounts focussing on penis envy and the formation of femininity must recur here in connexion with whether the basis of mothering is 'natural', in relation to lactation and the breast, or is social.

In this context, Michael Rustin has introduced an interesting discussion of Melanie Klein's work. 36 He poses, and answers, the apposite question as to why feminists have paid little attention to Klein relative to the considerable attention given to Freud. Klein's work does, after all 'reverse the patriarchalism' in Freud to a striking degree. Rustin stresses that Kleinianism, with its emphasis on the destructive as well as the nurturant aspects of the mother-child relation, is scarcely a sentimental account of motherhood such as might be expected to irritate feminists. But for all these rigorous qualities, Kleinian theory is nevertheless valorizing the caring functions predominantly assigned to women in their normal existing roles in this society. The women's movement, to put the matter rather starkly, has been chiefly seeking means to escape from the ideological and practical dominance of this role, into the relative freedom and apparent power which it perceives in assigned masculine functions. It has not been looking for a theoretical endorsement of the role of caring for babies. 37

There is a certain tension in Rustin's discussion of Klein, not unlike that found in Mitchell's account of Freud, on the question of biology. Kleinianism asserts the primacy of the social over the individual, jet it privileges biological parenthood. It sees femininity and masculinity as present in both sexes, jet it differentiates forcefully between them. It acknowledges the 'mother figure' and the bottle that substitutes for the breast, jet these substitutions are uneasy and unconvincing in tone. Rustin's conclusions are sensitive to the political implications of the

37 Ibul, p. 87

^{34 &#}x27;Authority', p. 57.

²⁵ The Reproduction of Mothering, Berkeley 1978, p. 215.

^{36 &#}x27;A Socialist Reconsideration of Kleinian Psychoanalysis', New Left Russes 131 (January/February 1982)

argument—particularly in relation to feminism—but he draws the conclusion that the family will be difficult to replace if children are to be raised in a secure and stable environment.

How are we to assess these different reinterpretations of the importance of mothering? Is Chodorow voluntaristic and Rustin realistic? Or 18 Chodorow taking a historian's position and Rustin a biologistic stance? It is a merit of both that they discuss the psychoanalytic arguments in the context of social, cultural and ideological considerations, but we would argue that ultimately neither goes far enough in this direction. Indeed, perhaps the major difficulty with psychoanalytic approaches in general is that they do not provide a sufficiently social contextualization of the familial processes they deal with. We can examine this further by returning to the question of whether psychoanalysis does give an accurate description of contemporary subjective reality. There is now a certain amount of consensus on the proposition that socialization based on paternal authority within the family has weakened. Recognition of this historical change has come from a variety of different political positions and the debate on its consequences has tended to centre on moral evaluations of this 'collapse' of patriarchal authority. What must be emphasized, however, is that we cannot focus exclusively on processes internal to the family as this will entirely mislead us into the blind alley of believing that 'the family' is in decline. As we have argued, dominant themes of familialism—including the authority relations identified by psychoanalysis—are absolutely pervasive in ideology generally. One way of putting this is to say, as Benjamin does, that patriarchal authority is now 'generalized' rather than 'personal'—the spirit of the culture. 38 It is irrelevant to mourn the death of the family when our society is more profoundly 'familialized' than ever before.

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^{38 &#}x27;Authority', p. 56.

Space and Agency in the Transition to Socialism

It is now over a decade since John Saville's survey of the Labour Party's history led him to the view that 'at least some things should become clearer as time moves along: that Labourism has nothing to do with Socialism: that the Labour Party has never been, nor is it capable of becoming, a vehicle for socialist advance; and that the destruction of the illusions of Labourism is a necessary step before the emergence of a socialist movement of any size and influence.' Yet for all the vagaries of Labour Party history since, that view has never gone unchallenged. On the contrary, more and more socialists—and revolutionary socialists at that—have slipped back into the Labour Party of late, arguing instead that only through participation in its internal struggles can the cause of socialism be advanced significantly in Britain. So it is not surprising that when my argument appears in NLR 129 reasserting the need for independent socialist politics, questioning the adequacy of the 'alternative economic strategy' and doubting the capacity of any Labour Government to use that strategy as a stage in the transition to socialism, that other socialists

should have felt the need to reply critically and quickly—as Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare have done in NLR 132 and as has Geoff Hodgson in NLR 133.²

The Hodgson critique is predominantly concerned with the existence or otherwise of a 'space for reform' in the transition to socialism. Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare cast their net wider and offer a powerful and sophisticated defence of Labour Party membership in the pursuit of that space and that transition. Since both critiques raise important questions on the nature of the Labour Party and on the character of any move to socialism in Britain, they deserve a serious and considered reply; and since all three articles (including my original one) occupy well-established positions in a long-running debate, there is something to be said for relating that reply to the more general debate, in an attempt to clarify the nature of the political choices facing socialists in Britain today.

The Question of 'Space for Reform'

Geoff Hodgson's critique turns in the main on his reading of my analysis of the crisis of British capitalism—an analysis of which he is particularly dismissive. My 'political economy of the socialist transformation' is apparently constructed on a flawed theory of capitalist decline, makes incorrect deductions from this flawed theory, and 'ends up with a weak criticism of the reformism' I am 'so keen to dismiss'. In particular, I am supposedly too prone to treat the tendency of the rate of profit to fall 25 an iron law and as a 'convincing explanation of the crisis in Britain', and too keen to 'view the class struggle as a zero-sum game' where 'if the position of the workers is to rise, that of the capitalists must fall'. As a result, I am guilty, we are told, of offering a 'far too mechanical . . . conception of the capitalist economy', and of failing to recognize, as 'history indicates, that there is no period of capitalist development in which reforms cannot in principle be delivered'. 5'Their actual delivery, Hodgson tells us, 'depends more on the state of the class struggle, and the relationship of forces between capital and labour, than (on) the economistic indicators of capitalist "decline" such as the share index or the rate of profit. So against my view—that at this stage of late capitalism it is not possible to implement a programme of democratic reforms whilst simultaneously reconstituting the growth rate and competitive strength of an economy still predominantly in capitalist hands—Geoff Hodgson argues that 'the important consequence' of his critique 'for the transition to socialism is

^{*} I would like to thank Gordon Johnston, Ralph Miliband, David Beetham, Lionel Cliffe, Mike Davis, Arthur Lipow, Rob Stones and Jim Parry for reading and commenting on an earlier draft of this article

¹ John Saville, 'Labouriam and the Labour Government' in R. Miliband and J. Saville eds., The Socialist Register 1967, London 1967, p. 68.

² D Coates, 'Labourism and the Transition to Socialism' New Left Review 129 (September/October 1981) hereafter LTS; Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare, 'Socialists and the Crisis of Labourism' New Left Review 132, (March/April 1982) hereafter SCL, and Geoff Hodgson, 'On the Political Economy of the Socialist Transformation', New Left Review 133, (May/June 1982) hereafter PEST.

³ **газт,** р. 66

⁴ Ibul, p. 57

⁵ *Пы*., р. 6о.

⁶ Ibid.

that sizeable increases in productivity cannot be ruled out; there is not a zero-sum tussle between wages and profits, and substantial reforms can be accommodated by increases in productivity in the transitional period'. This is possible, he says, just so long as 'substantially increased worker participation' becomes a central feature of the alternative economic strategy. It is this, in his view, which will enlarge the space for reform which I am too ready to discount.

There are two general problems that arise in replying directly to all this. The first (and though personally significant, the least important) is that I don't quite recognize my own argument in all its complexity as the Hodgson hammer starts to fall. This of course would be of no general significance were it not for the fact that important political points turn upon it, and for that reason only it might be worth discussing the distortion in detail in order to re-establish the validity of the political points in question. Geoff Hodgson's critique builds on (and what I am supposed to have said is filtered through) a set of themes on which he has written before and for which he is well known in left-intellectual circles: the Trotskyist propensity for iron laws in political economy, problems of value theory, the particular course of the British crisis, the mobilizing potential of the alternative economic strategy, and the case for Labour Party membership. That filtering gives his article a characteristic feel, but it also distorts the argument he is criticizing, and enables him to avoid the full force of the case being examined. As far as I can tell, and contrary to his description, I have argued consistently that capitalist crises are a result, not of a mechanistic tendency of the rate of profit to fall, but of 'a perpetual race between the rising organic composition of capital (which erodes the rate of profit) and the rising rate of labour exploitation (which acts as a counter tendency to sustain it). 10 I have argued too that this race is ultimately determined 'by the relative strength of capitalism's two great. classes, by the degree of working-class resistance and struggle'; 11 and as far as I can tell, to argue in this way is not, as Geoff Hodgson would have it, to 'make an explanation based on Marx's law of the falling rate of profit redundant', but on the contrary is to show precisely how such a law relates to the contemporary development of the world capitalist crisis. Be that as it may, it is worth saying too that the analysis in Labour in Power? on which Geoff Hodgson draws was not presented merely to explain the crisis of British capitalism, but rather to constitute the basis of an explanation of the downturn of the world economy of which British capital is a part, and from which the limits of its freedom of manoeuvre ultimately derive. Of course the particular weakness of British capitalism has to be explained in other ways—and was, 12 and will be more fully, as Geoff Hodgson knows, in an article yet to come. 13

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 61.

Ibul, p. 62

See, for example, his Tretsky and Fatalistic Marxism, Nottingham 1975; Capitalism, Value and Exploitation, London 1981; 'The political preconditions of the Alternative Economic Strategy', in M. Prior ed., The Popular and the Political, London 1981; Socialism and Parliamentary Democracy, Nottingham 1977, and Labour at the Crastronds, London 1981.

¹⁰ D Coates, Labour in Parer?, London 1981, p. 174.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 171—stalicleed in the original.

¹² Ibid, pp. 191-201

¹³ In volume 2 of D. Coates and G. Johnston, eds., A Societist Primer, London 1983.

At no point was class struggle presented as always a zero-sum process. On the contrary, Labour in Power? argued just the reverse, that 'in periods of economic upswing . . . the rate of capital accumulation, and the growth rate of total profits, will be more than sufficient to offset the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, and in this period employment will rise and real wages can increase whilst profit margins are still sustained'. 14 It is significant that all Geoff Hodgson's examples of successful reforms come from such periods of capitalist expansion, at the start of long booms built on the preceding defeat of the working class. The issue before us is not that, but of whether that 'space for reform' still exists in the downturn of late capitalism and in the context of a competitively weak national capital. Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare, amongst others, seem aware that the strength of the labour movement is a problem for capital at just that point; and so indeed does Geoff Hodgson elsewhere, when he explains dwindling profits not in terms of a changing organic composition of capital but in terms of class struggle. 15 What Geoff Hodgson has to demonstrate, and what he does not do in NLR 133, is that in such a context of national capitalist crisis there is space for 'a large number of significant non-pecuniary reforms' that will ease the transition to socialism by bolstering its popular appeal. And that argument is, of course, important politically, because if it is wrong, it then exposes a socialist government to the quick erosion of popular support as the error is experienced in practice, and squanders the opportunity to prepare the government's supporters for the degree of struggle and material deprivation likely in the transition.16

The second problem with replying to Geoff Hodgson's critique grows out of this: that he builds into his argument concessions to the case that he is refuting and that I have just restated—concessions that are allowed only to be dismissed. So we are told that in the transition to socialism 'resources to meet the demands of both investment and increased wages and social services are constrained' and that 'there is a probability of resistance by the capitalist class'; ¹⁷ or again that 'the economic and political constraints are very real and we should not suggest that massive increases in real income are possible now, within a crisis ridden capitalism, or even immediately after the abolition of the dominant capitalist relations of production'. ¹⁸ Yet all this is circumvented, in Hodgson's view, by the possibility of leaps in productivity through increased worker participation, enabling existing machinery to be run to much greater effect.

Now no one on the Left would presumably deny that in a post-revolutionary socialist society such a leap in productivity is to be expected; and it is significant that Hodgson draws many of his supporting examples from

¹⁴ Labour in Power?, p. 174.

¹⁵ sci., p. 66 (*.. the reduced ability of British capitalism to make economic concessions has made it increasingly hard for union leaders to make deals with successive governments, thus undercutting the traditional union-Labour relationship").

¹⁶ It is worth noting here that even the Cambridge Economic Policy Group have now come round to the view that the problems facing any incoming Labour Government would be enormous. (See their 'Prospects for the U.K. in the 1980s', Cambridge Economic Policy Record Vol 8(1) (April 1982) pp. 1 & 16)

¹⁷ **гезт**, р 61.

¹⁸ Ibd.

such societies: 'Russia in 1917-18, Cuba since 1970, China since 1967 and Yugoslavia since the Second World War'. 19 But we are not faced with a post-revolutionary situation, but with the problem of transition in a beleaguered national capitalism-more parallel to his other awesome example, 'Chile 1970-73', than to the rest of the countries he cites. Moreover we face a ruling class that is already committed to a similar goal of greater productivity—not by increasing the stock of capital available to each worker, but by intensifying the rate of exploitation through a reduction in working-class power at the point of production. Geoff Hodgson's throwaway line on Michael Edwardes is all the more amazing for that: Neither is Michael Edwardes, with his authoritarian style of management at British Leyland, the personification of the solution to the problems of British capital'. 20 For in truth, to one section of British capital, he 15-as Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare rightly see. 21 Only by discounting Edwardes and the ruling-class strategy he represents is Geoff Hodgson able to dismiss the considerable capitalist reaction likely to confront any strategy aimed at increasing workers' control. Only by failing to recognize that not only the monetarist but also the corporatist strategy for capitalist regeneration requires greater productivity through intensified work routines is he able to discount the danger that worker participation in a still predominantly capitalist society, and under the direction of a Labour Government of mixed political complexion, will have a high probability of quickly degenerating into just such a pursuit of intensified work routines and working-class restraint in the name of socialism.

Geoff Hodgson dismisses the fears of the far left that 'the increasing of productivity through worker participation' means 'traditional speed up, or more tiring and monotonous work . . . under increasing authoritarianism or repression'. 22 Yet the overall balance of the historical record in Britain since 1966 would certainly give support to those fears; and the very assertion that working-class industrial strength and the increasing competitiveness of a still capitalist economy are compatible leaves open the danger that the experience of the two as contradictory in practice will once more subvert popular support for radicalism rather than for capitalism. This happened in 1975 and 1976, when a potentially radical social contract was transformed into a simple wage freeze in which the vast majority of workers initially acquiesced; and something similar has happened at critical points in each Labour Government since the war. Hodgson concedes that too. He sees the danger, but discounts 1t; 23 and in so doing carries into the argument the possibility of a political strategy that can, under a transformed Labour Party, prepare the ground for its successful avoidance. Yet this is to raise not the question of 'space' but of 'agency'—of the Labour Party transformed into a vehicle for socialism and since this is common ground with Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare, let me turn now to their reaction to my call for the maintenance of a distance between socialists and the Labour Party.

¹⁹ Ibul, p. 62.

²⁰ Ibd, p. 63

²¹ sct., p. 62 (Thatcher has largely abandoned this corporate approach...she has identified most strongly with the factics of employers such as British Leyland under Michael Edwardes'.)

²² PEST, p. 63.

The Question of 'Agency'

My argument in NLR 129 on the Labour Party was entirely negative: that it was not a suitable vehicle for the pursuit of socialism; and that accordingly socialists should have nothing to do with it, since to do so was to lend credibility to the whole Labourist tradition from which any strategy of socialism had to break, was to consolidate the association of socialism in the public mind with the failure of Labour in power, and was to provide easy copy for the Right and Centre of the party in their periodic witch-hunts against the Left. I argued there instead for a new unity of the Left outside the Labour Party, a strategy of united action between the Labour Left and the revolutionary Left on specific issues, and the creation outside the Party of a point of reference for socialists within it. Tariq Ali, Quintin Hoare and Geoff Hodgson do not agree.

Geoff Hodgson's position on all this is more asserted than argued. He believes that not all that the last labour Government did should be discounted, especially when measured against the persistent weakness of the revolutionary Left itself, and he merely asserts that any progress as a result must be 'from inside' the Labour Party.24 In this he is in full agreement with Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare, who make the case at greater length. They argue that I misunderstand the significance of the present polarization in the Labour Party, do not adequately assess the dismal record of the revolutionary Left since 1968, and do not identify properly the key dangers to the working class in the present situation. They point to the existence of a qualitatively new Left inside the Labour Party, 'a novel phenomenon not reducible to earlier movements'. 25 They argue that the potential exists for the creation of a 'New Model' Labour Party, forged by an internal alliance between the Labour Left and the Marxists'26 that will grow by exploiting the scepticism about parliamentarianism that they believe to be widespread in the party's rank and file. They are confident 'that the only way in which the Labour Party would be able to restore its electoral fortunes and become a serious candidate for governmental power once again would be if it were to turn itself into a gigantic lever of popular mobilization, championing the cause of all sectors of the oppressed, backing and leading their struggles and offering a governmental perspective of real change'. 27 And as a result, the task they set themselves is a major one, of building Labour as a mass socialist party by drawing rank-and-file union activists into effective political participation, changing the existing style of political work, and . . . devoting more time and energy to programmatic elaboration of a broadly socialist character.'28 They are aware that such a party would at most be 'a left reformist or a centrist formation'29 with a programme that would only 'outrage even if not fundamentally challenge the capitalist class', 30 but they are certain that 'its appearance would represent a significant advance for the working class and the Left as a whole'. 31

All this is very attractive, so why then counsel caution? Three reasons spring to mind immediately: that we have heard it all before; that it all

²⁴ Ibid, p. 63 ²⁷ Ibid, p. 74

²⁵ sci., p. 67. ²⁶ Ibal, p. 80

²⁶ Ibal, p. 78. ²⁹ Ibal, p. 60

³⁰ Ibd, p. 80.

³¹ *Bul*, p. 60.

rests on a faith in the transformability of the Labour Party and that it is in any case rather over-optimistic, even a little over-dramatic. Let me deal with each in turn. Geoff Hodgson actually begins his article by recommending again Ken Coates's 1973 defence of Left Labourism³²—2 defence which was built partly on a powerful critique of the revolutionary Left ('people who can't win by-elections can't win socialism') and also on the potential for left-wing advance within the Labour Party. Then too, as now, we were told that 'another Labour Government offers socialists the chance to do well the work they botched last time: to force the imposition of socialist policies, or to isolate and defeat those who oppose them. 33 And then, as now, we were told that this would make or break the party: 'another Wilsonite government would split the Labour movement into irreconcilable camps, the vastly larger of which would be in opposition to it'. 34 Well, another such government has been and gone, the camps have not divided, and the vastly larger current in the movement as a whole is not so obviously on the Left. On the contrary, the Right and Centre of the Party remain entrenched, particularly in the leadership, and are still capable—as the Party reaction to the Falklands crisis makes only too clear,—of imposing their view on the Party, isolating the Left as they do

What arguments of this kind do is to underestimate the forces of unity and compromise that operate on the Labour Left as well as on much of the Party's Right and Centre, as evidenced by the agreement drawn up at Bishop's Stortford. They also underestimate the extent to which the adoption of the kind of politics that they advocate would presuppose not just a realignment of degree, but actually a qualitative shift in the Party's whole orientation to political action, and an associated break with the defining practices of the Party throughout its entire history. Or, if they recognize the scale of that shift, they seriously overestimate the ease with which it can be achieved. However much Peter Tatchell, for example, in the exchange of letters in The Times and Guardian that followed the NEC blocking of his Bermondsey nomination, might try to play down the differences between his politics and that of the 'soft Left', Left Labour MPS saw those differences only too clearly and wanted nothing to do with them.³⁵ Their response is the significant one here because of what it tells us about Tariq Ali's chance of successfully 'transforming the party into a campaigning vehicle for socialist objectives, 36 without splitting it irrevocably to the left of its centre. There are revolutionary socialists in the Labour Party, of course, who see their task as precisely to force that split, but it is just not clear whether this is what Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare are advocating. And if they are not, it seems to me that they seriously underestimate the depth of the resistance within the Labour Party that their politics will necessarily meet and the scale of the change that they are actually canvassing.

³² р**ез**т, р. 53

³³ K. Coares, 'Socialists and the Labour Party' in The Socialist Register 1973, London 1973, p.

³⁴ Ibul. D 174

³⁵ See, for example, the letter by Neil Kinnock in the Guerdian, 25 November 1981.
36 Tanq Ali, 'Bringing the Labour Party back to Socialism', the Guerdian, 20 November 1981.

Their excessive optimism comes out clearly in their description of the existing balance of forces inside the Party and in the country at large. Their claim that a Bennite set of policies is the only way to win popular support flies in the face of all the electoral evidence, their own explanation of Thatcher's success in 1979, and the whole thrust of Eric Hobsbawm's The Forward March of Labour Halted.³⁷ Yet if radicalism is not so popular, the pressures on the Labour Left to tone down their demands in the interests of unity and votes will be as strong as ever. It should not be forgotten that the Right and Centre also have solid roots in the Labour Party, are in fact entrenched in powerful positions of leadership which they have no intention of relinquishing, and are increasingly forcing the Left into retreat as a general election looms which a divided party is showing no signs of being able to win. Of course, to counter this, Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare place their faith in the new constituency activists and in their scepticism of such electoral pragmatism.

Yet their description of this new force ('tens of thousands of constituency activists ... interested in socialism, 38) sits ill with the more sanguine description of the true state of constituency organization presented by Aaronovitch: as an organization which 'in large numbers of working class areas . . . barely exists. Many party organizations were and are in practice run by caucuses centred on the Labour groups on councils'.39 Far from those constituency parties 'reflecting the changing social realities of a country whose long-established industrial base has been undergoing a series of cumulative shocks',40 it has been their very unrepresentativeness and lack of organic connection to the mass of the broad labour movement that has left them open to easy penetration by tiny groups of committed socialists. If that is a gain, it is one with a dangerously narrow base. Only a loose vocabulary enables Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare to treat splits in constituency labour parties as a 'polarization . . . in the labour movement', 41 as their own acknowledgement of the conservative trend of working-class voting in 1979, and cumulative trade-union defeats since, makes clear. There may be, and obviously 15, a connection of sorts between constituency activists and the wider layer of trade-union militants, but even here the two are not to be equated. As Paul Foot observed of the deputy leadership battle, 'the deeper any system of consultation went into trade union membership, the higher the vote for Healey'. 42 The Labour Left can claim no special status here as the spokesperson for a class. Rather the problem faced by the entire Left is how to win an uninterested, even hostile, mass constituency, and there is no necessary reason, given the unpopularity of Labour Governments, why a Left inside the party should be better placed for that task than a Left outside. Indeed the argument could well run the other way, that these days, socialists need to keep their distance from Labour Governments if they wish to avoid being tarnished by the same brush.

³⁷ Published by Verso Editions/NLB, 1981.

SCI. D. 78.

³⁹ Sam Aaronovitch, 'Recipe for Defeat', Marxim Today, April 1981, p. 17

⁴⁰ sct, p. 69

⁴² Paul Foot, Three Letters to a Benute (swe pamphlet, 1982) p. 10

Tarig Ali and Quintin Hoare build all their arguments for Labour Party membership on the potential of the new Left there. Yet it is to introduce a double standard to dismiss the revolutionary left for past failures whilst canvassing for the Labour Left in spite of equal failure. In fact, the record of the revolutionary left since 1968 is not as bleak as they would suggest. Not just the Anti-Nazi League but also the Right-to-Work campaign, the Troops Out movement, the part played by revolutionary socialists in the struggle against the 1971 Industrial Relations Act, and the role of the revolutionary left in the women's movement and the peace campaignall these have to be weighed in the balance too. Moreover, their explanation of why the revolutionary left grew is splendidly silent on its indigenous causes not least a disillusionment with Labour Governments and a quickening of the pace of class struggle. If that happened once it can happen again, and might do so more easily if revolutionary socialists of the Tariq Ali mould stopped re-asserting the legitimacy of the Labour Party project by applying for Party membership. It is, after all, not just the revolutionary left that denudes the Labour Left of support, but the Labour Left itself who erode the potential catchment area of the revolutionary groups. To quote Paul Foot again, 'if you all stay bickering in the Labour Party behind the closed doors of committee rooms, it's not only you who will suffer: we suffer as well'.43

The justification that Ali and Hoare offer is that this time things really are different, that the situation in the Labour Party this time is qualitatively new. We are told that there exists a new breed of constituency activists who are 'conscious that their potential allies are more likely to be found on Right-to-Work marches, black defence committees or in women's groups than in Southwark Town Hall or in Westminster'. 44 We are told too that Tony Benn's personal political trajectory is a significant reversal of the normal association of conservatism with age and office, that he constitutes a threat to the hegemony of the Right and Centre of the Party of an unparalleled kind, and that 'the style and emphasis' of his policies has increasingly been ready to encourage self-activating of a mass character among workers and other oppressed layers'. 45 And we are told that deep in the Labour Party lies the crucial division in British politics between those who identify with Capital and those who side with Labour, and that therefore our job is to get in and assist the anti-capitalist forces at work there. But immediately we are also told that Bevan's programme was more anti-capitalist than Benn's, 46 that Benn's own personal political development is uncertain, that the Bennite programme is indeed only a programme of partial reforms, that many on the Left of the Party do not give it united support, and that in any case 'the consciousness of most Labour Party members' has not 'decisively transcended reformism'. 47 Ali and Hoare seem to attach an excessive importance to Benn himself, and so leave their case dangerously dependent on the political fate of one individual—as Labour Lefts have done before, with MacDonald, Cripps and Bevan. Yet the limits of Benn's own politics are well known and have

⁴³ Ibad, p. 28.

⁴⁴ scl., p. 78.

^{45 /}bul, p. 68

⁴⁶ Ibn, p. 69. For the bitterness Bevan aroused in an earlier Labour Party, see Ian Mikardo, 'Labour in the Fifties', New Socialist, March—April 1982, pp. 45–8.
⁴⁷ SCI., p. 68.

been documented elsewhere; 48 the limits of traditional Left Labourism likewise. 49 It seems much more appropriate to see the 'soft Left' not as spokespersons for Labour against Capital, but as advocates—behind a socialist rhetoric—of one strategy (class collaborationist in its essence) for the regeneration of British industrial capital in the face of international competition. In opposition, this inner thrust of the Labour Left's Alternative Economic Strategy can be mixed with a socialist gloss and a genuine wish for working-class advance, but in power such ambiguities have to be resolved by a choice. Both the character of Benn's programme and the history of the Labour Left suggest that we will then see that the split between the forces of Capital and those of Labour will lie much nearer to the sdee of the existing Labour coalition than Alı and Hoare imagine; and that the bulk of Left Labour MPs and activists will, more or less enthusiastically, go along with the backsliding of a future Labour Government as Labour Lefts have done before. Indeed a future Labour Government seems set fair to find even less 'space' for its reforms than have Labour Governments in the past, and so promising more and delivering less, will discredit its project and that of anyone associated with it even more fully than happened in 1970 and 1979.

If that is the case, what then will be the fate of revolutionary socialists inside the Labour Party? For there is another strategy of revolutionary politics which historically has not been without its problems, and that is entryism. Open entryism leaves revolutionary socialists liable to rejection as party members, as Tariq Ali is experiencing now and as the Communist Party found before him, while secret entryism of the Militant kind gives perpetual material for the witch-hunts of the Right and Centre. But open or secret, revolutionary socialists inside the Labour Party need to organize themselves if they are to be effective, and in doing that they cannot fail to be accused of parasitism, of splitting, of dual loyalty and of dishonest intent. This must altenate them not simply from the Right and Centre, but also from sections of the Labour Left, who will see in their presence an extra cause of electoral failure. A revolutionary socialist in the Labour Party will need to argue for a new kind of politics for the Party as a whole, and this must precipitate perpetual conflict with more moderate elements there. A revolutionary socialist in the Labour Party will need to encourage and defend autonomous class politics against Labour as well as Conservative governments, and will need to do so in the build-up to elections no less than in their aftermath. Since the rhythm of such industrial struggles will not fall easily into line with the rhythm of electioneering, and since perpetual faction-fighting costs votes, this too must alienate as many of the Labour Left as it attracts. Far from consolidating an alliance with Left Labourites only through party membership, revolutionary socialists inside the Party seem set fair either to lose their separate identity and influence altogether (and be swallowed as have Lefts in the past) or to maintain their organizational cohesion only at the cost of alienating vast numbers of ordinary Labour activists by their very existence.

m Paper1, chapter 6

⁴⁸ See in particular Alan Freeman, 'Benn and British Socialism', International 6(3) September 1981, pp. 21-7; and 'The case for Keeping out of the Labour Party', Societist Roman, 13 July-13 September 1981, pp. 18-26.

49 See my The Labour Party and the Straggle for Socialism, London 1975, chapter 6, and Labour

For the 'New Model' Party proposed by Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare involves not just a change but a transformation of existing Labour practices, and will not be achieved incrementally but only by rupture. Because this is so, revolutionary socialists in the Labour Party must be seen by many even on the Left of the Party as threatening the Party's unity and electoral viability, and as such be felt to be as great an alien presence as were the sop before they split. Duncan Hallas does well to remind us that the bulk of active Party members are 'firmly wedded to Labour Party type politics . . . by conviction as well as habit. (They are) not a hotbed of frustrated militants struggling to throw off a thin layer of municipal careerists and would-be parliamentarians'. ⁵⁰ And because they are not, Tariq Ali's present politics face the unresolved dilemma of how to transform without splitting a coalition that would split rather than be transformed.

The Arguments for and against Membership

In defending again the activity of socialists inside the Labour Party, Ali, Hoare and Hodgson occupy positions in a long-standing debate on the strengths and weaknesses of the Labour Party both as a vehicle for socialism and as an expression of working-class political aspirations. In fact, wide-ranging though their arguments are, they only tap some of the dozen or so reasons often advanced for party membership and it might be helpful to lay these out in full and consider them as a whole.

The Labour Party as the Initiator of a Transition to Socialism

- I The Labour Party is a socialist party, and therefore socialists should join it.
- 2 The Labour Party is convertible to socialism, and therefore socialists should join it to speed the conversion process.
- 3 The Labour Party is not convertible to socialism, but a significant section of its membership is, and can best be captured in the inevitable party split by socialists who have long been active in the Party.
- 4 The Labour Left is reformist and inherently prone to class collaboration, but in its rise to political power will precipitate class movements that will carry the struggle beyond the limits of Labourism—and so socialists should organize inside the Party to force the pace.
- 5 The political advance of the Left in the Labour Party will shift the centre of political debate and consciousness in Britain, and greatly increase the self-confidence and assertiveness of oppressed layers, particularly workers, blacks and women.
- 6 Any Labour Government will discredit itself in power and so open the road to a political realignment behind genuinely socialist forces.
- 7 Lenin and Trotsky both encouraged entryism at various times, and their advice is still relevant—go in to 'denounce opportunist leaders from a higher platform visible to the masses' and 'accelerate the transfer of political power from the direct representatives of the

⁵⁰ Duncan Hallas, 'How Can We Move On?' *The Seculus Register 1977*, London 1977, p. 4 For an excellent discussion of the history of entryism, see also Duncan Hallas, 'Revolutionanes and the Labour Party', *International Socialism* 16 (Spring 1982), pp. 1–36.

bourgeoisie to the "labour lieutenants of capital" so that the masses may be more rapidly cured of all illusions on this subject.⁵¹

The Labour Party as the Expression of Working Class Interests

- 8 The Labour Party is the only viable vehicle for radical politics in contemporary Britain, and will remain so only if sustained by radical pressure internally.
- 9 The Labour Party has jobs to do other than achieving socialism—in particular the protection of trade unions and the defence of working-class interests—and therefore should be supported to further these.
- 10 The Labour Party is a working-class party created and sustained by the organized working class and possessing a special relationship with the unions. This has taken years to build, is a rare and precious thing, and is not to be discarded lightly. Moreover, since workers still look to the party for political leadership, who makes up that leadership, and what policy it follows, is still vital. A defeat for the Labour Party is therefore a defeat for the political strength of the entire working class, and an invitation to Tory reaction.
- 11 The Labour Party is the only route to the working class. Without a Labour Party membership card, socialists have no legitimacy in the eyes of their potential constituency.
- 12 The Labour Party is better than the Conservatives or the spp-Liberal Alliance and needs to be sustained as the best of a bad lot.
- 13 Anyway, the Labour Party is the only serious alternative. Revolutionary left groups have not and will not gain mass support. Indeed, if they were to grow, they would do so only to reproduce many of the Labour Party's distinctive characteristics.

All this constitutes a very powerful array of arguments, though clearly not all the points are compatible with one another, and none are without their problems, it seems to be that some no longer have any force at all. The repeated experience of Labour Governments has removed the forces of 1. The Labour Party is, at best, in need of conversion to socialism. It is not there already; and the alientation from Labour politicians that repeated office has produced in wider and wider sections of the working class removes the contemporary force of 11 to 2 considerable extent. The conditions which surrounded the Labour Party when Lenin spoke no longer apply, and so a simple reliance on revolutionary holy writ, as in 7, will no longer suffice; and the revolutionary left has had enough of a struggle to recruit in the wake of Labour Governments to no longer believe unambiguously in 6. That belief does linger, of course, but it is as much an argument for keeping one's distance from the Labour Party, lest one share in the condemnation, as it is an argument for membership. 2 and 4 are mutually incompatible; and I have argued in the previous section that I find a unconvincing and 3 likely to produce fewer revolutionary socialists than the 'splitters from within' would wish. 4 has its attractions to many on the revolutionary left, but the shadow of Allende must continue to stalk it. To capitalize properly on a revolutionary situation requires the full, open and extensive preparation of both party cadres and

³¹ Quoted in Alan Freeman, "The SWP and the Labour Party', International 6(1) May 1981, p 30

broad masses of workers for the character of the struggle ahead, and this is difficult to achieve from inside a Left coalition to whose success the revolutionary left is also ostensibly committed.

Others on the list raise questions of judgment and balance, and this is true particularly of those that turn on the Party's relationship to the working class. Much depends on whether you judge the class to be best defended by the unambiguous support of independent mass action from within its own ranks, or from within the Labour Party. The balance of class forces in the end is, of course, the only reliable source of the working class's protection and defence, but many on the Left find it quite easy to contribute to that by wearing at least two hats-working in single-issue campaigns, feminist groups and union struggles whilst also being active in their local Labour Party. But such a linkage of class struggles to a particular party through membership brings with it a contribution to the maintenance of a certain kind of politics—one that looks to the Labour Government for a political solution, and one that eschews any extraparliamentary independent revolutionary organization. There are real costs in this for the socialist project. Party membership helps to sustain the legitimacy of the Labour Party as an arena of socialist struggle and obliges the issues of that struggle to be filtered through its predominantly parliamentary set of preoccupations and procedures. It necessarily associates both the socialist project and the personal standing of individual revolutionary socialists with the performance of Labour Governments and introduces a hesitancy into the defence of workingclass interests and trade-union rights by many socialists when those are challenged, as habitually they are, by Labour Governments themselves. The very sustaining of the notion of the Labour Party as 'our party' leaves so many workers disproportionately vulnerable to a subordination to its industrial dictates, as we saw so tragically in the voluntarily accepted wage freezes of 1975 and 1976. Only the repeated reassertion of the fact that Labour Governments invariably succumb to the dictates of business and finance, and service the interests of workers only in the tiny space that those dictates allow, will protect workers from this. For the strongest answer to 9 is that except in the area of labour law and trade-union rights, the record of Labour Governments as protectors of working-class interests is a poor one, and has been sustained to the degree that it has largely through the strength of class resistance to parliamentary backsliding, a resistance that has emerged outside the formal channels of the Labour Party and largely independent of them. Participation in Labour politics, and identification in however limited a way with Labour Governments, militates against the adoption of a form of politics whose highest priority is the systematic encouragement of working-class mass organization and activity in the defence of its interests, and draws attention away from the degree to which radicalism inside the Party only gathers its strength from the prior existence of mass movements outside the party in whose initiation and direction the revolutionary left and many non-aligned socialists and radicals play a crucial part. 52 Membership in the Labour Party as a revolutionary organization has all the problems of entryism discussed earlier. Membership in the Party as an

⁵² On this, see Hilary Wainwright in Peter Hain, ed., The Debate of the Decade: The Crisis and Fature of the Left, London 1980, p. 27.

individual erodes the capacity to organize independently and behind an explicitly socialist programme, as a base from which to connect to patterns of struggle far removed from the electoral preoccupations of the Labour machine. Far from transforming the Labour Party by their membership, so often revolutionary socialists are themselves transformed, and this too is part of the cost to be set in the balance against the claims of argument j.

Yet there is still a residual and predominantly defensive role to be played by the Left inside the Labour Party. It is clearly better, as I would have it, for the Labour Party to be committed to unilateral disarmament than to the bomb, to favour workers' control over one-man management, to support abortion on demand instead of the Corrie Bill, and to support a more rather than less radical version of the Alternative Economic Strategy. Even when it is recognized that the revolutionary left have played an important role in shaping the extra-parliamentary movements that have initiated many of these demands, it still has to be conceded that someone has to push them inside the Party. But that seems to me to be an argument for unity campaigns and not for the submersion of revolutionary politics inside the Party itself. For the revolutionary left has a job to do too which Left Labourites cannot manage and entrists find difficult: to keep alive a distinct current of socialist politics, a qualitatively different conception of socialism and the route to it, and to act as a counterweight to the propensities for accommodation and reformism that are built into Labour Party parliamentarianism. Ground can be conceded to 12 by voting for Labour without illusions, but 12 does not of itself justify membership; and f gains its greatest force only if 2 is also true. If 2 is not, then the revolutionary left can press for a radical strategy in alliance with elements in the Labour Party, untrammelled by any concern for Party unity. For it is not enough, as with 13, to write the revolutionary left off. It has a job to do, and a presence to maintain, for as Leo Panitch has said 'what is entailed in creating a mass socialist party is not the political mobilization of the working class but its remobilization . . . That there is little historical evidence for such a successful remobilization is true. But where are the examples of a transformed social democratic party?'53

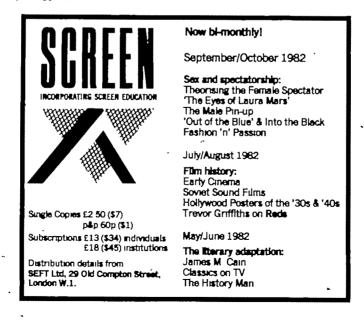
In the end there can only be a judgment, a weighing of costs and benefits, and an article such as this has a value, if it has one at all, only if it assists in that weighing. The costs of staying out of the Labour Party are real enough: of denying the Bennite wing personnel, ideas and votes on crucial committees. But the cost of entry are also high: of a reinforcement of Labourism, a withholding of energy from the struggle to create independent revolutionary organizations, and the ever present danger of subordination to the rhythms and logics of electoral politics. Which judgment prevails will turn partly on a view of the time scale. If things are less dramatic than Tariq Ali and Quintin Hoare feel, perhaps the longer view can prevail—that the quiet building of a strong socialist Left outside the Labour Party will in the end contribute more to the coming of socialism in Britain than will any immediate increase in Bennite votes.

⁵³ Leo Panitch, 'Socialists and the Labour Party: a Reappraisal' in the Socialist Register 1979, London 1979, pp. 72-3.

Which judgment prevails must also turn on a view of the nature of the transition to socialism in Britain now. I still see it as a process requiring struggle, involving capitalist reaction of a wide-ranging and potentially violent kind, and achievable only by sustained counter-pressure from a wide alliance of social forces committed to qualitative social change and ready for the hardship involved. Let Geoff Hodgson, if he wishes, dismiss this as the 'vague and improbable "big bang" theory of socialist revolution', ⁵⁴ but nothing in my reading of Labour Party history, practice and current personnel persuades me that the formation of such a force is even vaguely on its horizon. And judgment too, in the end, will turn on the assessment of imponderables and the relative weighing of priorities: of whether the Labour Party can be transformed, of whether it is possible and productive to sustain revolutionary organizations within a bigger and less radical political party, and of whether ten extra revolutionary socialists are worth ten less conference votes.

Because the balance is difficult, and the variables to be balanced as much the product of the decision as its cause, it does not surprise me that socialists go in different ways, or that people change their mind over time. Tarıq Ali has done the latter with disarming candour and honesty, and I quote him against himself not to score easy points but because I agree with him less now than once I did. My view, for what it is worth, stays with the Tariq Ali of The Debate of the Decade who saw the need for a 'revolutionary party which can mobilize the majority of the working people in this country... a new type of party... a mass revolutionary party'. 'Yes', he said that night, 'Unity in action against the cuts? Yes! Unity in action against the Corrie Bill? Yes! Unity so that we can dissolve our politics? No,'55 I think he was right then, and I hope that others might still agree with me.

⁵⁴ PEST, p. 61. ⁵⁵ Op at., pp. 73-4.



Wittgenstein's Friends.

Searching for an epigraph to his *Philosophical Investigations*, Ludwig Wittgenstein considered using a quotation from *King Lear*: T'll teach you differences'. 'Hegel', he once told a friend, 'always seems to me to be wanting to say that things which look different are really the same. Whereas my interest is in shewing that things which look the same are really different'. Perhaps one should not invest too much in this remark. One way in which Wittgenstein kept his distance from classical philosophy was by not reading it: as Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge he had not read a word of Aristotle; and as far as Hegel goes, he was once told by a professor in Russia that he ought to read more of him. Yet it is surely remarkable that Wittgenstein should consider choosing as a way of summarizing the project of the *Investigations* the term which more than any has become hallmark and totem of contemporary post-structuralism. Remarkable in one way, maybe, but not in another: the influence of Wittgenstein's work on Anglo-Saxon linguistic philosophy has served partly to obscure its deep-seated affinities with a body of thought which

has also shaped post-structuralism, that of Martin Heidegger.³ The Wittgenstein of Geach and Strawson seems largely to have lost that distinctively European timbre, that dimension of sheer strangeness and intractability, as one might claim that the Derrida of some Anglo-American deconstructionists has forfeited a certain rigorous circumspection and political resonance notable in the work of the master.

I. Everyday Language Versus Metaphysics

Russell and the Parsons

Meeting his friend F. R. Leavis one day in Cambridge, Wittgenstein stepped up and commanded him unceremoniously to give up literary enticism. We have Leavis's reaction in an ambiguous, posthumously published memoir. Perhaps Wittgenstein thought that Leavis should give up literary criticism because, like philosophy, it changed nothing. Wittgenstein's well-known claim that philosophy leaves everything exactly as it is has often been quoted as an index of social and intellectual reaction, a complacent consecration of existing 'language games', and there is surely some truth in this. The friend who once took him aback by telling him to his face that Marxism was nothing like so discredited as his own antiquated political opinions was as shrewd as she was bold. 5 But Wittgenstein's attitude to philosophy is not after all very different from that of Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, not that that formulation is impervious to criticism. How absurd to imagine that philosophy could change anything! If deep-seated conceptual change is to be possible, it can only be the result of transformations in 'forms of life'. Wittgenstein was thus presumably quite serious in urging his acolytes to abandon philosophy altogether. Philosophy might have a certain therapeutic value for the badly mystified, but it hardly seemed to warrant a lifetime's labour. Wittgenstein had a fine knack for philosophy but little respect for it, like someone who finds himself embarrassingly adept at juggling or playing the Jew's harp.

Russell and the parsons between them have done infinite harm, infinite harm', Wittgenstein complained to a friend. The metaphysical, as for Jacques Derrida, is the main enemy: that hunt for the crystalline structure of all speech which obsesses the early *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. The more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. (For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not a result of investigation: it was a requirement). The conflict becomes intolerable; the requirement is now in danger of becoming empty.—We have got on to slippery ice where there is no

¹ Quoted in Rush Rhees (ed.), Linding Wittgenstein. Personal Recollections, Oxford 1981, p. 171

³ The comparison has been noted before. See Karl Otto Apel, 'Wittgenstein und Heidegger', *Philosophisches Jahrbach* 75 (1967), pp. 56–94, and Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'The Phenomenological Movement', in *Etraps in Philosophical Hermanistics*, Berkeley 1976, pp. 130–181. See also Fergus Kerr, 'Language as Hermeneutic in the later Wittgenstein', *Tijdschrift voor Filosophi* 27 (1965), pp. 491–520

⁴ See Rhees, pp. 63-81.

⁵ See ibid, p. 35. ⁶ Ibid, p. 101.

friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need friction. Back to the rough groundl . . . A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.' (107, 115)⁷

The structure of our grammar holds out illusory representations to us, tempts us to assimilate kinds of discourse which have quite different uses. This is not some kind of knockabout anti-metaphysical iconoclasm, any more than it is for Jacques Derrida, who has constantly emphasized the inescapability of the metaphysical, 'Don't think I despise metaphysics', Wittgenstein warned. I regard some of the great philosophical systems of the past as among the noblest productions of the human kind. For some people it would require an heroic effort to give up this sort of writing'.8 For some people, indeed! It can't have been much less than heroic for Ludwig Wittgenstein to abandon the icily metaphysical Tractatus, the very bible of such thought for 2 whole coterie of philosophers, even though as a man he was adept at abandoning, often with casual brutality, any friend, belief or habit which seemed to him to block the path to personal purity. The personal fanaticism of this intensely repressed emigré patrician contrasts curiously with the generous pluralism of the Investigations.

Wittgenstein and Derrida are alike in suspecting all philosophy of immediacy, all grounding of discourse in the experience of a subject. The sign for Wittgenstein is not the mark of an inward sensation (intending, for example, is not an experience); meaning is an effect of the signifier, which must always already be in play, traced through with its history of heterogeneous uses, for the meaning of the subject to emerge at all. For Wittgenstein, as for post-structuralism, the subject is 'written' from the outset, an effect of the play of the signifier; any 'fullness' he or she may experience over and above this is no more than a rhetorical emphasis: I have seen a person in a discussion on this subject strike himself on the breast and say: 'But surely another person can't have THIS painl—The answer to this is that one does not define a criterion of identity by emphatic stressing of the word "this".' (253)

The 'private' sign, leashed by a supposedly internal bond to a pure sensation, is a metaphysical chimera, an instance of that philosophy of phenomenological self-presence which both Wittgenstein and Derrida are out to fracture by the disseminating force of language. Nor for either thinker can this force be recuperated or evaded by some unassailable notion of identity. Difference and identity are equally effects of discourse:

⁷ Philosophical Investigations, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford 1963. References to the numbered sections of this text are given in brackets after quotations, where a section is not numbered, the page reference is given instead.

⁸ Rhees, p. 120

A recent comparison of Wittgenstein and Derrida can be found in Anthony Giddens, Coural Problems in Social Theory, London 1979, pp. 33–48; though Giddens's attitude to Derrida is considerably more negative than my own. See also Charles Altien's interesting article, 'Wittgenstein on Consciousness and Language A Challenge to Derridean Literary Theory', Maiora Language Notes, vol. 91, 1976, which like Giddens adopts a more negative attitude towards Derrida's work than myself

how do I know that this is the 'same' sensation as I was having last Wednesday unless I have learnt to deploy words in a particular rule-governed way? Perhaps I can privately invent names for my experiences and use the 'same' name each time the 'same' one comes up, as A. J. Ayer once argued 10—a ceremony which for Wittgenstein would be precisely equivalent to my left hand giving my right hand money (268); or to someone exclaiming 'But I know how tall I am!' and placing his hand on top of his head (279); or to a man buying himself several copies of the daily newspaper to assure himself that what the first copy said was true (265).

How can I invent names for my experiences unless I am already inscribed in a discourse which includes the practice of naming experiences? How could I get somebody to understand the name of an object by pointing to it, unless he or she already grasped the social institution of pointing, looked away from my fingertip to the object rather than up my arm? If only I know whether I use a word to identify the 'same' experience then the ceremony is empty, as nothing here would count as going wrong (and thus of going right). The man who buys several copies of the newspaper fails to see that the first text was a copy too—that there was no 'original' text, that there is no privileged originary sign which grounds all the others. Wittgenstein as much as Derrida is opposed to the idea that certain forms of language are specially privileged, meaningful in some unique, fundamental way'. 11 The person who uses the same privately invented sign each time an experience comes up has grasped the point that signs, to be signs at all, must be in Derrida's term 'iterable', but not the point that it is just this iterability which fissures their self-identity 12—that since there is no 'pure' repetition, the question of what counts as difference or identity is a social question to be contended over within discourse and forms of life, not a problem resolvable by 'experience'.

Rules of the Game

'A thing is identical with itself'. There is no finer example, Wittgenstein says, of a useless proposition. (216) 'We seem to have an infallible paradigm of identity in the identity of a thing with itself.' (215) So I know that two things are the same when they are what one thing is! And how did I apply what I knew of one thing to two things? Anyone can say that It is five o'clock on the sun' means the same as It is five o'clock here', but this is no more informative than saying that what it means for me to have a pain is what it means for you to have one. (350) In the Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics, Wittgenstein considers how we would respond to someone who when following a rule seems suddenly to change its application but on being told that he is now doing something different denies it. ¹³ This would not necessarily be perverse, for rules are not commands and do not carry their interpretations on their faces. What counts as a different way of proceeding under one rubric may count as the

12 See Jacques Derrida, 'Limited Inc', Glyph 2, 1977, p. 190.

13 Oxford 1956, 1, 115.

¹⁰ See 'Can There Be Λ Private Language', reprinted in George Pitcher (ed), Wittgonston The Philosophical Investigations, London 1968, pp. 251-266.

¹¹ A.M. Quinton, 'Contemporary British Philosophy', excerpted in ibid, p 12

same under another. Wittgenstein is not a 'structuralist' out to decentre the subject into some set of unbreachably determining codes: for 'what does a game look like that is everywhere bounded by rules? . . . Can't we imagine a rule determining the application of a rule, and a doubt which it removes—and so on?' (84)

Such an infinitely regressive recourse to meta-rules in order to eradicate indeterminacies is for Wittgenstein as for Derrida merely one more metaphysical illusion: 'But then the use of the word is unregulated, the "game" we play with it is unregulated.—It is not everywhere circumscribed by rules; but no more are there any rules for how high one throws the ball in tennis, or how hard; yet tennis is a game for all that and has rules too.' (68) If someone has been taught to master an arithmetical series, 'how far need he continue the series for us to have the right to say that (he has done so)?'. 'Clearly', Wittgenstein says, 'you cannot state a limit here'. (145)

But still, it isn't a game, if there is some vagueness in the rules', muses Wittgenstein ironically. (100) Perhaps, once we admit such indeterminacies, the whole definition (of 'game', 'text', 'mode of production') collapses. This, indeed, is the illicit move made by certain strains of post-structuralism. Once we have seen through the chimera of ideality. recognized with Wittgenstein or Derrida that the play of our discourses is potentially unbounded and the metonymic chains of the signifier unstoppable, then we are plunged into an abyss in which nothing is certain except 'undecidability'. But concepts of 'certainty', 'exactness', 'indeterminacy' and so on, like concepts of identity and difference, 14 operate within practical forms of social life and take their force from that. It is just as transcendentally unhistorical to assert that all discourse is undecidable as it is to claim that all language is luminously clear. The post-structuralist devotee of undecidability is to this extent merely the prodigal child of the metaphysical father. Without exact boundaries we don't know where we are!' It is the tom in which one says this—anxious or euphoric—which indicates whether one is a metaphysician or a deconstructionist. But what that indicates in turn is a certain complicity between the two. Of course language is 'indeterminate': how could it work, how could we walk, if it were not? Can't it 'work perfectly', Wittgenstein asks, to say 'stand roughly there'? Is Frege right to claim that an area with vague boundaries isn't an area at all? Is an indistinct photograph not a picture of a person at all, and is it always an advantage to replace an indistinct picture by a sharp one? (71) 'Am I inexact because I do not give our distance from the sun to the nearest foot?' (88)

Perhaps discourse is groundless, the transcendental signified illusory, in the sense that there isn't a 'last' definition; but what would count as this in the first place? 'Last' for whose and what purpose, within what practical forms of life? 'Do not say: "There isn't a last definition". That is just as if you chose to say: "There isn't a last house in this road; one can always build an additional one".' (29) Indeed one can: just as new language games

¹⁴ And, one might add, of simplicity and complexity: one of Wittgenstein's important mights is that these terms too are relative to contexts of discourse, that there is no 'absolute' or 'fundamental' simplicity.

can always emerge into existence; for there are no transcendentally fixed bounds to discourse, and language is productive precisely because of, not despite, this indeterminacy. ¹⁵ (The criticism that Wittgenstein consecrates the linguistic *status quo*, though accurate in one sense, is mistaken in another, since if it is in the nature of language to be dynamically indeterminate it can have no high degree of stability to be consecrated.) But the fact that one can always build a new house, reinscribe a piece of discourse in a new context, or develop new forms of discourse altogether, does not strike the concept of 'the last house' or 'the last definition' meaningless in a particular use of it. What counts as an adequate or ultimate definition 'will depend on the circumstances under which it is given, and on the person I give it to' (29); and we should remember in any case that we sometimes demand definitions 'for the sake not of their content, but of their form. Our requirement is an architectural one; the definition a kind of ornamental coping that supports nothing'. (217)

An explanation does not 'hang in the air unless supported by another one'. (87) And if there is no ultimate ground to explanation, no immovable bedrock of sense, then it is still metaphysical to believe that this renders an explanation any less of an explanation. There is a form of post-structuralist thought which makes much the same mistake in this respect as that made by the Christian Brothers who tried to teach me, at the age of eleven, Aquinas's demonstration of the existence of God from causality. What was the cause of the water boiling? It was clearly no kind of answer to reply 'The heat of the gas', for what caused this? And then that? And so on. To avoid an infinite regress here you must finally posit a first uncaused cause, God.

Post-structuralism is not theistic, but some modes of it have not thereby ceased to preserve the metaphysical structure of this argument. In removing the end-stop of the Almighty, such theories weave the metonymic chains tied to his throne into the inexhaustible operations of the text, in which every element is invaded, disrupted and rendered undecidable by every other. One simple response to this is that 'The heat of the gas' is indeed the answer to 'What causes the water to boil?' It counts within certain discursive criteria as the answer to that question. You may then choose to raise a further question, or you may not. 'An explanation may indeed rest on another one that has been given, but none stands in need of another—unless ar require it to prevent a misunderstanding'. (87) What will determine whether we need to give another explanation is the social context in which we are arguing. Whether this explanation is found exact or desperately indeterminate depends on what we are doing.

'Doubting has an end', Wittgenstein writes. (180) This, too, would seem at odds with a certain post-structuralist bent, despite the affinities between such thought and Wittgenstein's that I am trying to suggest. Surely nothing could be more metaphysical than claims to certainty? Let

^{15.} ask yourself whether our language is complete;—whether it was so before the symbolism of chemistry and the notation of the infinitesimal calculus were incorporated into it, for these are, so to speak, suburbs of our language. (And how many houses or streets does it take before a town begins to be a town?) (18)

us consider one such claim; the claim that in certain circumstances I can be certain of what you are feeling. When I see you rolling at my feet with your hair on fire then I can be certain that the utterances you are producing signify pain, rather than simply being able to infer or surmise that you are in pain. I cannot say I can know that I am in pain but can only guess that you are', since as Wittgenstein comments the sentence I know that I am in pain' is meaningless. I can be as certain of someone else's sensations in certain circumstances as I can be of any fact. Wittgenstein remarks—as certain as I am that twice two is four. If this does not mean that I am 'mathematically certain' of your sensations, it is only because mathematical certainty is not a psychological concept, and that such a claim merely conflates two different language games. (224) But the fact is that I can be, if you like to use the term, 'absolutely' certain in such situations of what you are feeling. 16 Those who doubt this do so because they are the captives of traditional forms of metaphysical dualism. It is metaphysical to doubt that we can sometimes know with certainty what others are feeling. Those post-structuralists who believe that in subverting concepts of certainty they are putting the skids under metaphysics should perhaps consider that in this respect at least they are doing exactly the opposite.

Discourse and 'Forms of Life'

Wittgenstein's argument here rests on a particular view of the relations between discourse and its material conditions; and this is also an issue of relevance to contemporary debates between post-structuralists and historical materialists. The former appear to the latter to be idealists in their suppression of the material conditions of discourse, or in the discursive imperialism whereby they would translate such conditions into yet more undecidable 'text'. The latter appear to the former as discursive reductionists, smuggling in some 'transcendental signified' (history, the 'real') in order to lend discourse yet another metaphysical underpinning. For all practical purposes it would appear that there was a choice between the two approaches: some discourse theorists refer texts to their material conditions of possibility, while others do not. But if Wittgenstein is right then there is not in fact a choice in the matter: discourse is internally related to its social conditions. If a lion could talk we would not be able to understand him (223), not simply because he was speaking a foreign language (we might always get to translate it), but because his language would be as necessarily inaccessible to us as his form of life. If you spend your life on four legs roaring and chasing after raw meat then you could not speak intelligibly to beings like ourselves. As Norman Malcolm puts it: If we want to understand any concept we must obtain a view of the human behaviour, the activities, the natural expressions, that surround the words for that concept'. 17 The relation between discourse and forms of life is necessary, not contingent; for Wittgenstein the language of sensation in particular would be incomprehensible if it were not closely bound up with actual behaviour.

¹⁶ See Wittgenstein, On Curtainty, ed. G.E. Anacombe and G.H. von Wright, Oxford 1963, passim

17 'Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Issustigations*' reprinted in Pitcher, pp. 91–2.

It follows that 'what has to be accepted, the given, is—so one could say—forms of life'. (226) This is not an expression of political conservatism: there is no reason why what has to be accepted are these particular forms of life, and indeed little reason to believe that Wittgenstein himself was in the least content with his own society. It is just that even if existing forms of life were to be revolutionized, those transformed practices and institutions would still in the end provide the only justification for why people spoke and thought as they did. Such practices would not thereby be self-justifying: you could always get people to see that they were in some way at fault, and thus to change them. When someone is inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do' to justify his or her beliefs and utterances (217), you can always say: 'Well, do something else!'

Where Wittgenstein's philosophy is reactionary is not in its referring of beliefs and discourses to social activity, but in its assumption that such referring constitutes a liberation from the metaphysical. When philosophers use a word—"knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "name"—and try to grasp the sitence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home?—What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use." (116)

And where, for Marxism and post-structuralism, could metaphysics be more at home than in the everyday? For Wittgenstein, metaphysical mystifications seem to arise for purely linguistic reasons—from 'a tendency to sublime the logic of our language' (38), from 'the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language' (109). The task of philosophy is consequently 'not to advance any kind of theory' (109), but to familiarize surroundings which have suddenly become alien, to remind us of our whereabouts. In a way we were seeing through the metaphysical all the time: philosophy will simple 'arrang(e) what we have always known' (109), articulate what everyone admits, and we have only to take the metaphysical spectacles off our nose in order to see reality straight. 'The ideal, as we think of it, is unshakable. You can never get outside it, you must always turn back. There is no outside; outside you cannot breathe.—Where does this idea come from? It is like a pair of glasses on our nose through which we see whatever we look at. It never occurs to us to take them off.' (103)

The specular image, suggestive of certain Marxist notions of 'false consciousness', is interestingly undermined by Wittgenstein's arguments elsewhere in the Investigations. For if metaphysical mystification arises out of the very structures of our grammar, how can these be 'taken off?' Perhaps this is why Wittgenstein does not write here that the ideal is the pair of glasses, but that the ideal of it is—a kind of double refraction. But what is freeing ourselves from the ideal of the ideal other than freeing ourselves from the ideal, and how could this possibly be done if the ideal is embedded in the very forms of our daily discourse? Are these glasses idealizing ones, such that if we took them off we could see reality for what it is, or is it that if we took them off we would see the ideal steadily for what it is? Is this idealization just a form of astigmatism, corrigible at will (we can always decide to take the glasses off if it occurs to us to do so), or does this ideal picture 'lie in our language' (115), out there beyond our noses,

such that the mere correct perception of it will not make it go away? Is seeing the ideal the same as seeing through it? Why doesn't it occur to us to take the glasses off? Because the ideal is closer to us than the mere idea of it, part of the structure which allows us to produce ideas (of the ideal) in the first place, inside the head rather than perched outside on the nose?

It is the ideal itself, Wittgenstein tells us, which deceives us into thinking that we can never get outside it, that there is no outside, that outside you cannot breathe. But how could you even think of breathing in the first place in an outside which is no place at all, which is not the outside of anything and which is not an inside either? The ideal seems at once to intimate and deny an outside to itself, cannot indeed deny it without intimating it in that very act. Caught on this problematic frontier between an outside which does not exist and an inside which is therefore not an inside at all, Wittgenstein will escape not by 'always turning back', but by turning away to ordinary language itself: fleeing from prison to home, from ice to the rough ground, from thin air to the living, breathing world. But this outside is an inside too, for it is here, after all, in the rough-and-ready forms of our speech, that philosophico-grammatical illusions are continually generated; the very instruments with which the metaphysical will be safely defused are themselves metaphysically contaminated. If 'ordinary language' contains the perpetual possibility of metaphysical illusion, if its logic is sublimable, then such operations cannot be contingent to it but must be part of its very character. Metaphysical distortions are not 'external' contaminations implanted from above by philosophy, but products of an internal 'defectiveness' of which metaphysical philosophy itself is merely the most dramatic.

Derrida and Nietzache

'What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stand,' (118) Now the inside/outside metaphor has shifted to one of base and superstructure: the metaphysical houses of cards rest on the ground of ordinary language but can be demolished in a way which leaves that ground intact. In clearing away these flimsy edifices, philosophy 'may in no way interfere with the actual use of language . . . It leaves everything as it is'. (124) One can see well enough, then, why Wittgenstein needs his houses to be made of cards: it would not be so easy to demolish a building of brick or stone and leave the ground on which it was standing unseared, for such a building has foundations which might also need to be uprooted, foundations which render the binary distinction between 'above' (or 'outside') the ground, and the ground itself, between 'air' and 'earth', considerably less stable. For Wittgenstein philosophy 'cannot give (actual uses of language) any foundation' (124), for such language games have their foundation already. in forms of life. It would be superfluous for philosophy to try to ground these forms of life in hypostasized essences: that is the metaphysical error.

But what if it was superfluous because these forms of life were in some sense metaphysical already? Wittgenstein would seem to believe that it is traditional philosophy which is the metaphysical villain, 'exterior' to the unimpeachable ground of social life; but if philosophy, like any other discourse, can itself be explained only in terms of certain concrete social

practices, his case simply deconstructs itself. He must find himself arguing, rather like Derrida's Plato and his pharmakon, 18 that 'everyday linguistic use' is both source and prophylactic of metaphysical disorder. Paul Feyerabend has argued that Wittgenstein, contrary to his usual way of thinking, does indeed want to draw a sharp line between philosophy and social life, for unless he did so he would be forced to admit that philosophy is itself a 'language game', that there is no determinate border. between it and other discourses, and that its existence, far from being a mere therapeutic response to linguistic disorders, thus poses a serious historical problem in its own right. 19 One might argue similarly that deconstruction's refusal to pose itself as a theory is in practice a suppression of its historical conditions of existence.

Feyerabend also suggests that Wittgenstein 'does not want his reader to discover that reading is not a mental process. For if 'mental process' is used in a metaphysical way in 'reading is a mental process', it is used just as metaphysically in 'reading is not a mental process'. 20 He is not out to provide us with a different theory of such metaphysical entities as 'mental processes' but to induce the problem to self-destruct, as it were, by referring such uses of language back to their quotidian home. In this sense, as Feyerabend recognises, there is a continuity between the Wittgenstein of the Investigations and the mystic of the Tractatus, for whom 'he who understands (the author) must finally recognize (these sentences) as senseless . . . (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it). He must surmount these (sentences) . . . then he sees the world rightly.'21 Religious illumination breaks upon the reader of the Investigations when he or she realises that there are no metaphysical problems, that everything lies open to view and that the world is the way it is; such illumination strikes the reader of the Tractatus when he or she is somehow shown how language pictures the world, a relation which language itself cannot state.

Jacques Derrida, rather similarly, is not out to advocate a theory of the metaphysical. He sees, as Wittgenstein does not, that there is no escape from the prison house of metaphysics into 'ordinary language'; that indeed 'ordinary language' is itself a metaphysical illusion, and that any conception of an 'outside' to metaphysics, sublimely uninfected by its propositions, is itself a metaphysical opposition. The fly is not to be let out of the fly-bottle quite so easily. Nevertheless, for Derrida too, thereare moments when through the disruptive force of textual dissemination we may show—not state or conceptualize—a fissure in the metaphysical enclosure, moments which in the sense of the Tractatus have something mystical about them.²² If what a certain form of deconstruction predicates of all discourse—that it is ultimately undecidable—must

18 See 'la pharmacie de Platon', in La disolarmation, Paris 1972, pp. 71-197

²¹ Tractatus Legio-Philosophicus, translated by D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness, London

¹⁹ See Feyerabend, 'Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations', reprinted in Pitcher, pp. 146-150 I have elaborated a little on Feyerabend's point here. ²⁰ Ibid, p. 145.

<sup>1961, 6.54.
&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> For an interesting 'deconstructive' reading of the *Trantaths*, see Sylviane Agacinski, 'Découpage du Tractatus', in Sylviane Agacinaki, Jacques Derrida and Sarah Kofman (eds), Mimens. Deserticulations, Paris 1975, pp. 19-53

logically be predicated of itself, then we are back to that self-destructing moment of the *Tractatus* in which the impossible 'truth' of language is disclosed at the very point of its annihilation.

Aware that the death of God has left metaphysics securely in place, Wittgenstein and Derrida seek to complete the task which Nietzsche began, and in doing so risk moving into an alternative form of religion. The strength and weakness of deconstruction is that it seeks to position itself at the extreme limit of the thinkable. This rocks the foundations of metaphysical knowledge to the precise extent that, posed at the extreme edge as it is, it threatens like Wittgenstein to leave everything exactly as it was. To affirm that because of the nature of discourse and the movement of the signifier no analysis can be exhaustible, no interpretation ultimately grounded, valuably demystifies the metaphysical but is, as I have tried to use Wittgenstein to demonstrate, quite compatible with talk of 'truth', 'certainty', 'determinacy' and so on. To make a stronger claim—that because of the nature of discourse no truth or certainty is possible at all—does indeed make a dramatic difference to everything as it is, but is itself no more than a negative metaphysic.

Wittgenstein returns a disreputable answer to the question of the practical foundations of the metaphysical; Derrida is wholly silent upon the question. The former would dissolve metaphysics by recourse to 'popular' discourse; the latter remains locked within certain textual strategies. The former's 'popular' language remains largely metaphysical; the latter's strategies remain distinctly unpopular. We may now turn to a third thinker, whose work strikingly combines and surpasses both positions.

II. Language as Carnival

The Brothers Bakhtin

One of Wittgenstein's closest friends, in so far as he had any, was Nikolai Bakhtin, lecturer in Classics at the University of Birmingham, and later the first professor of linguistics there. Born in Russia in 1896, the son of a civil servant who was an untitled member of the nobility, Bakhtin studied Classics at Petersburg University, where he associated with the Russian Symbolists, was deeply influenced by Nietzsche and hoped for an Hellenic renaissance. He volunteered to fight in the First World War, and on the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution seems at first to have assumed a fairly neutral posture; but roused by reports of Red atrocities he joined the White Army in 1918 and saw some fighting. Sometime later he emigrated from Russia, spent four years in the French Foreign Legion where he was wounded in action and was invalided out to a bohemian life of semi-starvation in Paris. Here he gave occasional lectures on ancient Greece, and became a member of the editorial board of the literary journal Zreno. From Paris he came to England and in 1935 was appointed assistant lecturer in Classics at University College, Southampton. In 1938 he became lecturer in Classics at Birmingham University, and in 1945 founded the department of linguistics there. In his later years he was engaged on a study of Plato's Cratylus—a doomed project, the drafts of which are held in the Birmingham University library.

Bakhtin was apparently unable to organize his ideas into a coherent statement: he privately published one book in 1945, an introduction to the study of modern Greek; and a collection of rather unremarkable essays and lectures of his, on such topics as Tolstoy, Pushkin, Mayakovsky, realism in theatre and Russian Symbolism, was edited in 1963 by Austin Duncan-Jones. ²³ By the time of the Second World War, this erstwhile Russian aristocrat and White Guard had become, in his friend Fanya Pascal's words, a 'fiery Communist'; ²⁴ his memoir of the Russian Revolution—'The Russian Revolution as seen by a White Guard'—makes it plain that he regarded himself as having fought on the wrong side, and that the White Army 'fully deserved destruction'. ²⁵ He joined the Communist Party before his death in 1950.

According to all reports, Nikolai Bakhtin was an extraordinary character, passionate, flamboyant and exuberant, and exerted a deep influence on Wittgenstein. His widow, Constance Bakhtin, reports that 'Wittgenstein loved Bakhtin', ²⁶ and the two men apparently conducted 'interminable discussions'. According to Panya Pascal, Wittgenstein was 'unusually happy and gay in (Bakhtin's) presence, and never dropped him as easily as he did others'. ²⁷ Bakhtin was the friend to whom Wittgenstein, as he notes in the Preface to his Philosophical Investigations, explained the ideas of the Tractatus. ²⁸ Exactly what the two men discussed is not known; but Bakhtin fiercely espoused what he took to be an Aristotelian sense of the particular over Plato's tyranny of the universal, and one can see well enough in a general way how this would fit with Wittgenstein's own philosophy of language.

In his essay 'Aristotle verus Plato', Bakhtin sees Plato, much after the manner of contemporary deconstruction, as a remorselessly 'binary' theorist, concerned with separation, opposition and division, and opposes to this 'tyranny of abstract ideas and dogmas over life' an Aristotelian engagement with 'continuous transitions of shades and qualities', a 'living multiplicity of moral values' which runs counter to the univocal metaphysics of a Plato. ²⁹ His notion of thought is pragmatist and dynamic: ideas in Russian literature are 'bits of condensed energy to be converted into action . . . A work that counts is a generator of force, a rule of conduct, an appeal to action, a battle cry, an order, a challenge'. ³⁰

It is not difficult to feel the consonance of this cast of thinking with the outlook of a Wittgenstein, Bakhtin has high praise for Mayakovsky and the Russian Futurists as the revolutionists of the word appropriate to a Bolshevik age, much as he feared and opposed Mayakovsky when a White Russian school student. His essays on poetry disclose a consis-

²³ See A Duncan-Jones (ed), Nikolas Bahhim: Lacturus and Essays, Birmingham 1963. I owe much of my information about Bakhtin to Michael Holquist, co-biographer of Mikhail Bakhtin, in personal communication, but write, unfortunately, before the publication of Holquist's work.

²⁴ Sec Rhees, p. 28

²⁵ Lectures and Essays, p. 61.

²⁶ See Rhees, p 28

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ See Fergus Kerr OP, 'The Use of Heidegger', New Blackfraers (February, 1982), p. 54²⁹ Lactoris and Essays, p. 98

³⁰ Ibid, p 38

tently populist strain: 'Literature', he argues, was an historically late conception in Russia, distinct from a 'poetry' which had its roots in the oral practice of the people. In what might now be termed a characteristically 'phonocentric' gesture, he writes of the 'deadening effects of the printing press' on poetry, 31 and cultivates against this a concept of linguistic energy and passionate particularity which for him typifies Russian literature at its greatest.

The most important literary historical fact about Nikolai Bakhtin, however, has yet to be mentioned. For he was the elder brother by a year of Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, one of the major Marxist philosophers and aestheticians of the twentieth century. It is Mikhail, not Nikolai, who combines and surpasses the positions I have sketched above. There is apparently no evidence that the two brothers remained in contact after 1918, when their ways parted in the midst of post-revolutionary turmoil. We know, however, that Nikolai came across a copy of Mikhail's work on Dostoevsky in Paris in 1930. 32 We also know that though the brothers never-met again after 1918, they had been extraordinarily close as children and were later to contend that they had never encountered anyone else in their lives who had been so important in their development. 33 The two men were influenced by much the same literary and intellectual context: as students, they were contemporaries at Petersburg University during one of the most stimulating and turbulent periods of twentieth-century Russian cultural life. Both men were to embark upon careers which took the philosophy of language as their basis, and there are some affinities between Nikolai's essays and lectures and Mikhail's 'Discourse and the Novel', surely one of the most superb documents of Marxist literary criticism of the century.³⁴ By a curious historical quirk, then, it may be that the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein is indirectly related to the mainstream of Marxist aesthetics.

The Novel and Semantic Subversion

This does not seem an exaggerated claim, considering the book Mikhail Bakhtin published in 1929 under the name of his colleague V. N. Voloshinov, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language. Like Wittgenstein, Bakhtin insists in this text on the concrete uses of languages rather than on some metaphysical notion of essences; unlike Wittgenstein, however, he sees such concrete uses to be inseparable from the realm of ideology. The sign must be viewed not as Saussurean abstraction, definable by its exchange-value with other signs, but as concrete utterance unintelligible outside the material conditions and social relations in which it is caught up. For Bakhtin, the sign is material and 'multiaccentual', a shifting nexus

³¹ Ibid, p. 140 Wittgenstein also comments that 'what confuses us is the uniform appearance of words when we hear them spoken or meet them in script and print' (11) It is interesting that in contrast with the usual Detridean gesture he here equates rather than opposes 'voice' and 'writing', detecting the possibility of a muleading homogenising in both. One need not perhaps be guilty of McLuhanite banality to think that there may be something in this.

³² See Duncan-Jones's introduction to Bakhtin's Lactures and Essays, p. 2

 $^{^{35}}$ I am endebted for this point to Michael Holquist, in personal communication

³⁴ Now reprinted in Michael Holquist (ed), The Dialogic Imagination, Austin and London 1981, pp. 219-422.

of ideological struggle which is never stable or self-identical but lives only in its 'dialogic' orientation to other material signs. His literary interests are accordingly in those genres—'carnival', Menippean satire, and indeed for Bakhtin the 'novel' as such—which embody some mighty 'polyphonic' contestation of discourses, genres whose sociality is inscribed in their very form; one language inhering within, relativising and decentring another; one form of discourse invading, subverting, citing, framing, parodying or dismantling another.

Epic, for Bakhtin, is a type of that metaphysical 'monologism' in which truth is determinate and self-identical, transcendentally guaranteed by the aura and authority of an unimpeachable mythological past; the novel, which he sees as inherently multiple and disruptive, a 'dialogic' parody and deconstruction of other literary forms, destroys this epical aura rather as mechanical reproduction does for Walter Benjamin, unleashing a heterogeneity of language which is always unbounded and untotalized, in which 'there is no first word (ideal word), and the final word has yet to be spoken'. What Bakhtin has done in fact is to take the terms drawn up by Georg Lukács in his Theory of the Novel—the epic as lost totality, the novel as doomed to 'transcendental homelessness'—and boldly invert their values. In the inconclusive context of the novel, 'all the semantic stability of the object is lost'; there is always 'an unrealised surplus of humanness' (37) within which the human subject itself is radically divided, and 'man ceases to coincide with himself'.

Bakhtin, as Michael Holquist argues, gives the name 'novel' to whatever force is at work within a literary system to reveal its artificial constraints. ³⁶ 'Discourse lives, as it were, on the boundary between its own context and another, alien context' (284), and in this way authoritative or metalinguistic language, which 'permits no play with the context framing it, no play with its borders' (243), is forced by a set of satirical alienation effects to render up its concealed relativism. In this explosive 'heteroglossia', this 'Galilean' linguistics which decentres all metaphysical signifiers, 'no living word relates to its object in a singular way: between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme... Indeed any concrete discourse (utterance) finds the object at which it was directed already as it were overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value...' (276).

Words, as for Derrida, are always-already inscribed, dense with the tangled traces of other historical-uses. This direction of speech to and reception of it from an Other is true also for the emergence of the human subject: 'consciousness awakens to independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourses surrounding it, and from which it cannot initially separate itself . . .' (345). In this sense there is no language which

³⁵ Ibid, p. 30. Subsequent page references to this text are indicated in brackets after quotations.

quotations.

36 Ibid, p. xxxi This is surely an unworkably broad definition, it is difficult to see its relevance to, say, Manifold Park. Bakhtin's claim that poetry and drams are inherently 'monologic' seems equally dubious counter-examples, signally Brecht, could be adduced.

is not, in Jacques Lacan's terms, refracted through the Other: 'All direct meanings and expressions are false' (401), and the unity of the subject is in consequence an ideological construct: 'The unity of a man and the coherence of his acts... are of a rhetorical and legal character' (407). The novel for Bakhtin destroys 'any absolute bonding of ideological meaning to language', which is the very condition of magical and mythological thought (369); and its heteroglossia is enabled by the disintegration of stable verbal-ideological systems at certain key points (the Hellenistic era, Imperial Rome, the middle ages) of historical conflict. When class, regional, national and other discourses collide and are confounded through the breaching of some discrete ruling-class language, the socially productive soil for the novel is laid down.

The Anticipation of Post-Structuralism

It is surely striking how Bakhtin's work seems to recapitulate, long before they had started, many of the dominant motifs of contemporary post-structuralism and to lend them moreover an historical basis. The division and dispersion of the human subject within language; the disseminating force of a 'centrifugal' language which fractures all authoritative codes; the recognition, now perhaps most closely linked to the name of Michel Foucault, that what is at stake in discourse is not only the signified but who speaks it and under what conditions; a Derridean concern with iteration, citability and 'framing', such that 'the speech of another, once enclosed in a context, is—no matter how accurately transmitted—always subject to certain semantic changes' (401): all of these are notable proleptic gestures.³⁷

Yet it is equally striking how this affinity with post-structuralism has already been brusquely refused by certain exponents of that approach. David Carroll dismisses Bakhtin's notion of the novel as 'empiricist', yet another hapless prisoner of the illusion that discourse can 'represent' historical reality. ³⁸ In one sense, perhaps, this comes down to arguing that it is empiricist to claim that the Artful Dodger speaks a kind of Cockney. But it also overlooks the extent to which Bakhtin's aesthetics, while doubtless 'representational' and certainly 'logocentric', ³⁹ nevertheless promise to throw the whole metaphysical conception of representation into a certain disarray. If truth is never direct but always dialogic,

³⁷ It is not only post-structuralism that Bakhtin prefigures: contemporary hermeneutics and reception theory are equally anticipated. As for psychoanalytical criticism, the relevant text here would seem to be less his rather predictably 'orthodox' Marxist critique of Freud (*Frenheusus: A Marxist Critique*, New York 1976) than his great study of Rabelais. The relevance of Bakhtin's work for feminist criticism remains to be explored.

³⁸ See his essay 'Representation of the End(s) of History' Dialectics and Fiction', in

Rethinking History: Time, Myth and Writing, Yale Franch Studies 19 (1980), pp. 203-4

39 Bakhtin complains in his unsurpassed study of Russian Formalism that the Formalists suppress the fullness of the human utterance in a work of art by attending only to the materiality of its language. Paradoxically, however, he sees this suppression of a meaning which is always elembers, in the work's relation to its context, as a kind of 'logocentric' cult of the work's full, undivided presence: "The fear of meaning, which, with its "not here" and "not now" is able to destroy the material nature of the work and the fullness of its presence in the here and now, is the fear which determines the poeur phonetics of the formalists' (P N Medvedev/M.M. Bakhtin, The Formal Method in Literary Scholaribip, Baltimore and London 1978, p. 105.) It should also be remarked that Bakhtin's undeconstructive stress upon the living voice is complicated by the continual traversal of that voice by 'alien' elements

intertextual, then this, as Bakhtin sees in his comments on Rabelais, may offer itself as 'a parody of the very act of conceptualising anything in language' (309). What is 'represented' for Bakhtin in the novel is less 'historical reality' than 'images of language'; it is simply in this great turbulence and antagonism of historically determined discourses, not by some unmediated reflection of a real object, that literary texts are for him most deeply historical.

Post-structuralist denigrations of Bakhtin are themselves historically understandable, ⁴⁰ for the whole force of his work is to unite what we might now rhetorically call certain Derridean and Lacanian positions with a politics revolutionary enough to make much post-structuralism nervous. In 1972, in *Positions*, Jacques Derrida remarked that as far as he was concerned the encounter with Marxism was 'still to come'. ⁴¹ One decade and one global capitalist crisis later, Derrida is, as the actress said to the bishop, a long time coming. Gayatri Spivak has sought to defend this silence on the grounds that Derrida takes a long time to work his way through texts, as though revolutionary politics were a question of library opening hours. ⁴²

By the time of his great work on Rabelais, Bakhtin's 'deconstructive' strategies are fully harnessed to that popular subversion of ruling-class metaphysics which is carnival, that 'temporary liberation from the prevailing truth' which 'marks the suspension of all hierarchical ranks, privileges, norms, and prohibitions'. The 'gay relativity' of popular carnival, 'opposed to all that(is) ready-made and completed, to all pretence at immunitability' (II), is the political materialization of Bakhtin's poetics, as the blasphemous, 'familiarizing' language of plebian laughter destroys monologic authoritarianism with its saturical estrangements. The Nietzschean playfulness of contemporary post-structuralism leaves the academy and dances in the streets, as a somatic superabundance which mocks, materializes and transgresses the metaphysical pieties of the medieval and Renaissance state. Among the modern names which Bakhtin cites as sustaining this tradition of grotesque metamorphosis is that of Bertolt Brecht.

Materialist Poetics and the 'Dialogic'

Perhaps one could situate Bakhtin's achievement within the coordinates

⁴⁰ Though see Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel', in *Dairs in Language*, London 1980, pp 64-91, for a much more positive evaluation.

⁴¹ Translated by Alan Bass, London, 1981, p. 62. Derrida has recently provided a rather fuller statement of his relation to Marxism, arguing that his own past silence on the subject should be seen not as 'neutral' but as itself a political gesture—a refusal to participate in an anti-Marxist front, despite his belief that the concept of revolution is naively metaphysical. He adds, however, that such a belief should not be taken to devalue the force which the concept may have in practical political situations, and declares that there is no question any longer either of a simple rejection of Marxism or of a simple taking up of position. In the same passage he acknowledges that certain American literary critical uses of his work contribute to an institutional closure which serves the dominant political and economic interests, but relegates responsibility for the use of his work to the reader. See Les fau de Pharmas, Paris 1981, pp 326—9.

⁴² See Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, Baltimore and London 1976, p. 318, n. 19.

⁴³ Rabeleis and His World, Cambridge (Mass.) 1968, p. 10.

⁴⁴ For a fuller account of Bakhtinian carnival, see my Walter Banjaness, or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism, NLB/VKB50, London 1981, pp 144-146

of the present essay in the following way: Derrida is much preoccupied with the materiality of the signifier, but only at the price of violently severing it from the material conditions within which it moves. Wittgenstein rightly returns our attention to such conditions, but in his studied linguistic 'ordinariness' displays little sense of semiotic potential. For a third possibility—a writer who united the two projects only at the risk of parodying both—we might turn to Walter Benjamin. Benjamin's magical, mimetic theory of language certainly couples word and script in intimate correspondence (he early perceived a relation between his own Kabbalistic linguistics and Marxism), and restores to the signifier its full resonance and density. But Benjamin's correspondences of word and thing are too little mediated, while the signifier is sometimes naively rematerialised as emblem and hieroglyph. (The Origin of German Baroque Drama depicts a world in which the signifier may be rematerialized only as fetish, as magical sign; the Wittgenstein of the Tractatus betrays a similar nostalgia for the hieroglyph as against verbal language.) Bakhtin, by contrast, produces what could genuinely be termed, with equal stress on both words, a materialist poetics. It is not a question of choosing between semiosis and social conditions: to analyze the ideological force of an utterance is, inseparably, to interpret its precise rhythm, inflection, intonality, and to refer it to its determining social context.

One of the earliest historical instances of the 'dialogic' for Bakhtin is Socratic irony; and it is interesting that this is in some sense too the implicit genrs of Wittgenstein's Investigations. The Investigations are a voice in dialogue with itself and an implied other, digressing and doubling back, so that the reader is not supplied with ready-made truth as in the monologism of a Russell, but invited to share in the unfoldings, quickenings and arrestings of the discursive process, with its jokes, aphorisms, unanswered questions, parables, exclamations and wonderings aloud. It is less consent to discrete propositional truths which Wittgenstein demands, than consent to a way of seeing; his work has the form of the classic Leavisian question 'This is so, isn't it?', recalling us its

But whereas Wittgenstein appeals in this way to what 'we' know, to ordinary language, Bakhtin appeals to the language of the people. His work is populist in the most productive Marxist sense of the term, politicizing Wittgenstein's anti-metaphysical opening to everyday language and finding in its carnivalesque forms what Gramsci would call a 'spontaneous' political philosophy. For Wittgenstein, the task of philosophy is to re-familiarize an everyday landscape made strange by metaphysics, leading words patiently back to their homes in practical life. For Bakhtin, it is a certain mode of practical life—the discourse and practice of carnival—which grotesquely defamiliarizes the metaphysical truths of routine social existence.

For Wittgenstein, it is the metaphysical which is abnormal, disruptive, estranging; for Bakhtin the metaphysical is what is normative and the language of the people disruptive and estranging. For Wittgenstein,

⁴⁵ Stanley Cavell comments on the dialogic style of the *Investigations* in his "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy', reprinted in Pitcher, pp. 182–184

'philosophical problems arise when language goes on boliday' (38); for Bakhtin it is the holiday of carnival which promises to dismantle them. The unboundedness of Wittgenstein's language games becomes in Bakhtin's hands a transgression of political limits; the Anglo-Saxon appeal to the 'concrete' becomes in the Russian's work a celebration of the licentious politics of the body. Post-structuralism knows something of that libidinal, transgressive power but can give it little or no historical home; Wittgenstein can give language an historical home only at the cost of leaving its metaphysical base intact. He does not see that if metaphysics are to be abolished at all, it could only be by a transformation of practical life, not by a mere return to it. And in the process of such transformation, philosophy, pass both Wittgenstein and Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, does indeed have a role to play.

III. Language as Fetishized Exchange

For Jacques Derrida, what forestalls the sealing of precise meaning in an equitable exchange of signs is the fact that each signifier has a history of use-values whose traces disrupt such a contract. The productive forces of language threaten to burst and disseminate beyond the social relations of meaning. The Saussurean sign, in short, is the sign as commodity, repressing its traces of production, its value defined by abstract exchange rather than by social use. 46

The point need not in fact remain purely metaphorical. For there is a major tradition of Marxist thought which derives philosophy itself from exchange-value and commodity production. The key text here is Lukács's History and Class Consciousness, for which commodity production is 'the model of all the objective forms of bourgeois society, together with all the subjective forms corresponding to them'. 47 Theodor Adomo, whom Lukács's book greatly influenced, wrote that 'the exchange principle, the reduction of human labour to its abstract universal concept of average labour-time, is fundamentally akin to the principle of identification. Exchange is the social model of the principle, and exchange would be nothing without identification'. 48 For Adomo, indeed, 'identity is the primal form of ideology'; and the tortuousness of his own writing, struggling to avoid at once the 'bad immediacy' of irrationalism and the false self-identity of the concept, finds some parallel in the acrobatics whereby Derrida deliberately poses himself on the frontier between some unusable metaphysics and its inconceivable beyond. Both Adomo and Derrida strive to grasp 'whatever is heterogeneous to thought' as a moment of thought itself; but since such heterogeneity must inevitably be thought, 'reproduced in thought itself as its immanent contradiction', 49

⁴⁶ Saussure actually uses money as metaphonical for language at one point in his Cours de Impustique générale. Simon Clarke has recently recalled the centrality of the principle of exchange or reciprocity in the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, and observes that 'for Lévi-Strauss it was the principle of reciprocity that was the key to the liberal democracy of the United States' (The Foundations of Structuralism, London 1981, p. 46). Clarke demonstrates how, in articles written in the United States and published in France in the 1940s, Lévi-Strauss advocated the principle of reciprocity, supposedly embodied in Us society, as relevant to the political reform of his own society.

History and Class Consensations, Cambridge (Mass.) 1971, p. 170.
 Negative Dielectris, London 1973, p. 146 (translation amended).

⁴⁹ Ibid

the enterprise is always teetering on the brink of blowing itself up. For both men, it can only be writing itself—'style'—which ceaselessly rescues the project from self-destruction.

Adorno and Strategies of De-reification

I have suggested elsewhere that many of the apparently novel themes of Derridean deconstruction are anticipated by Adorno. 'Long before the current fashion, Adorno was insisting on the power of those heterogeneous fragments that slip through the conceptual net, rejecting all philosophy of identity, refusing class consciousness as objectionable 'positive' and denying the itentionality of signification.' The list could be extended: in his Zar Metakritik der Erkenntnistbeorie (1956), Adorno, like Derrida, rejects as illicit any philosophy which depends on a first principle or ground; and elsewhere he extends his critique of identity in Derridean fashion to language itself: 'Language becomes a measure of truth only when we are conscious of the non-identity of an expression with what we mean'. 51

But for all the similarities I have tried to show between Derrida's and Wittgenstein's notions of identity, Adorno's point here is firmly anti-Wittgensteinian. Indeed for Adomo the Wittgensteinian view of language (not that he discusses it directly) is literally children; for the child, 'the meaning of words and their truth content, their 'attitude towards objectivity', are not yet sharply distinguished from each other. To know what the word 'bench' means and to know what a bench really is . . . is one and the same to that consciousness', 52 For Wittgenstein, of course, to know how the word 'bench' is variously used simply is to know 'what a bench really is'. For Adorno, such a view of language is fetishistic, wielding a totemic name as a substitute for the truth of the object. But such fetishism is not easy to undo, for the language in which we might undo it is equally tainted. 'At the outset there is fetishism, and the hunt for the outset remains always subject to it. That fetishism is hard to see through, of course, since whatever we think is also a matter of language. Unreflective nominalism is as wrong as the realism that equips a fallible language with the attributes of a revealed one.'53 The final phrase could be a direct comment on Wittgenstein's endorsement of existing language games: in seeking to defetishize metaphysical meanings, Wittgenstein has converted fallible everyday language into a 'revealed' one and thereby succumbed to a fetishism of common usage.

But just as Wittgenstein's own project is self-defeating, in hoping to 'see through' metaphysical fetishism with the commodified language of daily life, so for Adomo the opposite strategy is equally ironic: philosophy must de-reify routine life in a discourse which is reifying from the outset. Philosophy's problem is on the one hand to avoid identifying the truth of a concept with its mystified daily uses, and on the other hand to avoid reifying the concept beyond all such uses, thus rendering them purely nominalistic. Language and truth must be at once identified and

⁵⁰ Walter Benjamin, or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism, p. 141n.

⁵¹ Negative Duelectics, p. 111

⁵² Ibid 53 Ibid

non-identified: 'It is in Heidegger's favour that there is no speechless 'in-itself'—that language, therefore, lies in truth, not truth in language, as something merely signified by language. But the constitutive share of language in truth does not establish an identity of truth and language'. 54

Perhaps there is a sleight of hand here with the word 'language'. If Adomo means 'particular uses of language', then these may indeed be non-identical with truth; if he means 'language as a whole', then it is hard to see how there could be any question of a truth which lay outside this. Adomo has himself momentarily fallen victim to a reified concept of language, conflating different uses, and a Wittgensteinian move here may help to clarify the problem. What Adomo wants to avoid—truth as empirical consensus—is a point which Wittgenstein anticipates: 'So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?—It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in forms of life.' (241)

What Wittgenstein means, presumably, is that what 'human agreement' decides is not what is true or false, but the criteria as to what is to count as truth or falsity. Agreements or disagreements in opnion are possible only because of some primordial pact struck in the very structures of our language, which are in turn embedded in social practices. Without such a fundamental contract we could not say what would count as a proposition at all, let alone what would count as a proposition's being true. And this contract, unlike the mythical social contract, is not one legislatable at will: it is already inscribed in social activities and institutions. Adomo, then, does not have to salvage the concept of truth by reifying it outside of language: he simply has to point out, against the whole grain of Wittgenstein's numbingly consensual thought, that disagreements are possible not only between opinions but between forms of life themselves. For Mikhail Bakhtin, truth is itself a 'dialogic' concept; but the 'dialogue' in his case is a sharp, unremitting struggle between antagonistic class idioms and interests.

Wittgenstein's belief that an appeal to ordinary language may defetishize our thought is at one point interestingly illustrated by a monetary metaphor: 'You say: the point isn't the word, but its meaning, and you think of the meaning as a thing of the same kind as the word, though also different from the word. Here the word, there the meaning. The money, and the cow that you can buy with it.' (But contrast: money and its use) (120).

In seeking to overturn one fetishized version of language—meaning as a mental entity mysteriously linked with a sign—Wittgenstein runs unwittingly into another. His implication is that money, like language, derives its value from its multiple social uses; but the value of my money is not of course determined by what I use it for. Money is metaphysics incarnate, as treacherously homogenizing as the structures of grammar: 'Just as every qualitative difference between commodities is extinguished

⁵⁴ Ibid.

in money, so money, on its side, like the radical leveller that it is, does away with all distinctions'.⁵⁵

It is deeply ironic that Wittgenstein should offer as an image of use-value the 'universal equivalent' (Marx). By trusting to money as difference—you can do many varied things with it, he hints he merely obscures its function as an extinguisher of difference; just as, in highlighting the use-values of language, he obscures the fact that such uses nonetheless remain prisoners of metaphysical assumptions. For Wittgenstein, however, what is concealed is quite unimportant: Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything.—Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us' (126). If what is concealed in class-society by the fetishism of commodities had in fact been of interest to Wittgenstein, he might have come to recognize that metaphysical obscurities are not the passing products of social transparency, but social 'transparency' the effect of an essential obscurity. He might have discovered, to extend the 'pathological' metaphor he occasionally used of his own work, that he was dealing not merely with a distorted text but, like Freud, with the meaning of text-distortions themselves.⁵⁶

Walks with George Thomson

One man who might have helped Wittgenstein to this recognition was George Thomson, Marxist professor of Classics at Birmingham University, and perhaps best known today as the author of a pathbreaking materialist work on ancient Greek tragedy, Assebylus and Athens (1941). Thomson had first come to know Wittgenstein while a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and the two men became close friends; it was Thomson who invited Nikolai Bakhtin to move to Birmingham to teach Classics there, and his Greek Language is dedicated to Bakhtin. Bakhtin was Thomson's best friend and exerted a strong intellectual influence on him, not least upon Assebylus and Athens, conversely, Thomson influenced Bakhtin politically and had an important hand in his moving to the Left.

It would be interesting to know whether Thomson, who accompanied Wittgenstein on long walks, ever discussed with him the ideas later embodied in his book *The First Philosophers* (1955), published four years after Wittgenstein's death. ⁵⁷ For Thomson's argument there is of direct relevance to Wittgenstein's own attempts to demystify philosophy, and the materialist theory of language outlined in his first chapter, with its insistence on the imbrication of speech with bodily gesture, could well owe something to conversations with Wittgenstein. ⁵⁸ Unlike both

⁵⁵ Karl Marx, Capital, vol. 1, London 1971 p. 108.

⁵⁶ Russell Kest, in a critique of Jurgen Habermaa, has indicated the political limitations of the psychoanalytic model, in a way relevant to Wittgenstein's notion of philosophy as a 'reminding'. "The victims of ideology may in some sense be said to be 'unconscious' of certain things, but surely not of things that they had at one time been conscious of, and then repressed. To free onself from ideology is not to recover a lost element of one's past' (The Politics of Social Theory, London 1981, p. 179)

⁵⁷ London 1955.

⁵⁸ In a celebrated epiphany, Wittgenstein was once much illuminated about the nature of language by a sudden Neapolitan gesture of Piero Sraffa's. Water Benjamin also found evidence for his 'mimetic' theory of language in the gestural discourse of Naples See 'Naples', One Way Street, NLB/VENSO, London 1979, p. 176.

Wittgenstein and Derrida, however, Thomson is concerned to give an account of the historical conditions which brought metaphysical thought into existence in the first place. This is not only a question of the historical division of manual and intellectual labour, with thought's consequent illusory trust in its own autonomy; it is more particularly a question of the growth of commodity production. The formalizing, abstracting, quantifying, homogenizing and universalizing characteristics of philosophy, so Thomson claims, are the product of the generalization of commodity exchange and the invention of coinage in the Greece of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.

Philosophy, as distinct from mythology, emerged for the first time in Greece and China with the invention of the coinage. ¹⁵⁹ In the thought of Anaximenes, Pythagoras and other early Greek thinkers, 'the world was by implication stripped of quality and presented as a quantitative abstraction . . . (Parmenides's) pure being, stripped of everything qualitative, is a mental reflex of the abstract labour embodied in commodities, (28) his pure reason, which rejects everything qualitative, is a fetish concept reflecting the money form of value'. ⁶⁰ Thomson's book is in part indebted to Alfred Sohn-Rethel's later published *Intellectual and Manual Labour* (1978), which finds in the Galilean laws of inertial motion a reflection of the movement of the circulation of commodities, and draws parallels between the 'empty' time and space of exchange relations and the dematerialized time and space of Newtonian physics.

This whole argument has a distinctively reductionist flavour. Philosophy for Thomson is 'the ideological reflex of commodity production', 61 and at one point Sohn-Rethel flatly names Parmenides's 'One' as money. 62 It is not easy to find a balance in this kind of theorizing between vague homologies on the one hand and crudely direct causality on the other. Both Lukács's and Adomo's derivations of thought-forms from commodity fetishism are notably essentialist—indeed Adomo writes more than once of the commodity as the 'essence' of bourgeois society, and his obsession with the doctrine of commodity fetishism has itself, one might claim, something fetishistic about it. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how post-structuralist awareness of the tenacity and pervasiveness of the metaphysical, as an unbreachable inner structure and outer limit of all thought, has in recent years largely ignored this suggestive line of enquiry, first touched on in Marx's own celebrated comment in Capital that the commodity is 'a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtlettes and theological niceties'.63

For the Marx of the Eighteenth Brumairs, bourgeois society constricts the potential heterogeneity of history within empty, falsely formalizing images; here, he remarks, 'the phrase (goes) beyond the content'. The aim

⁵⁹ The First Philosophers, p. 341.

⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 263, 315.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 342.

⁶² Intellectual and Manual Labour, London 1978, p. 65

⁶³ Marx, p. 41 Early post-structuralism by no means ignored this question see in particular Jean-Joseph Goux, *Economical symbolism*, Paris 1973: A more recent contribution is Gayatri Spivak's intervention in the Derrida colloquium now published as *Las fias de l'homme* (pp. 505-514)

of socialist revolution is to release that repressed historical content from those fetishized mythological or metaphysical forms in a ceaseless semiotic process which will outstrip and overturn any particular signifier, in which 'the content (will go) beyond the phrase'. 64 History will then begin, liberated from the metaphysics of repetition, and men and women will be able to live in the plural, heterogeneous play of their productive forces. The post-structuralist who celebrates such play now is not so much wrong as somewhat premature.

IV. Wittgenstein and the 'Captive' Gramsci

In New Left Review 73, John Moran assembled some previously unavailable (or suppressed) evidence about Wittgenstein's sympathies for the Soviet Union. It is known that Wittgenstein visited the Soviet Union in 1935 with the idea of studying medicine in England and then returning to Russia to practice as a doctor. There seems little doubt that in some ways he looked favourably on the Stalinist regime, and more recently published evidence would tend to confirm Moran's conclusions. 'People have accused Stalin of having betrayed the Russian Revolution', Wittgenstein told a friend in 1939, but they have no idea of the problems that Stalin had to deal with; and the dangers hew saw threatening Russia. I was looking at a picture of the British Cabinet and I thought to myself, "a lot of wealthy old men".'65 The philosopher Rush Rhees records Wittgenstein's opinion that the Soviet regime at least provided work for the people, which he believed the most important consideration, and states that he was unimpressed by talk of labour camps or tyranny. 66 'If anything could destroy my sympathy with the Russian regime', he told Rhees in 1945, 'it would be the growth of class distinctions'. 67

Wittgenstein's leanings towards Stalinist Russia, as the New Left Review editorial introduction to Moran's article points out, are if anything evidence of his ignorance of Marxism rather than his affinities with it. Though he was apparently a good deal more politically conscious than has sometimes been made out, his attraction to the Soviet Union at its most draconian and repressive period is probably explicable in terms of his 'extreme personal asceticism, and fixed belief in the regenerative powers of manual labour as such'. 68 Wittgenstein began his professional life as an engineer, and punctuated his philosophical career with flights into seminary gardening, village school-teaching and solitary self-communings in Norway and the west of Ireland. His deep respect for manual labour, at which he was personally unusually adept, is perhaps best seen as a form of intellectual suicide, the fetishism of a self-torturing Tolstoyan. It differs perhaps in this respect from the carnival spirit which Mikhail Bakhtin discerns in that other religious tradition of reverence for manual labour, Franciscanism. 69 Wittgenstein's personal response to the divi-

Marx and Engels: Solocted Works, London 1968, p. 99.
 Rhees, p. 158
 Ibid, p. 226
 Ibid, p. 231n.

⁶⁸ New Left Review 73 (May/June, 1971), pp 83-4
69 Francis called himself and his companions "God's jugglers" (reculators: Deserve) Francis's peculiar world outlook, his "spiritual joy" (lestitie spiritualis), his blessing of the material bodily principle, and its typically Franciscan degradations and profanation can be defined, with some exaggeration, as a carnivalised Catholicism' (Rabeleu and Hu World, p 170.).

sion of manual and mental labour was to live as a reluctant prisoner of the academy while harbouring a Heideggerian impulse for peasant toil.

Piero Sraffa

Yet there is more to be said about Wittgenstein's relations with Marxism than that. We have vet to mention his third and most influential friend, the economist Piero Sraffa, friend and supporter of the imprisoned Antonio Gramsci. Wittgenstein acknowledges Sraffa in the Preface to the Investigations as one who has 'for many years unceasingly practised on my thoughts', and declares him to be the source of 'the most consequential ideas' of the book. We do not know whether Sraffa discussed Gramsci with Wittgenstein, though given the two men's personal closeness it seems possible. Wittgenstein and Gramsci would seem strange bed fellows, and its may well be that Sraffa locked them into separate compartments of his life. Yet Gramscı was like Wittgenstein concerned to demystify philosophy: It is essential to destroy the widespread prejudice that philosophy is a strange and difficult thing just because it is the specific intellectual activity of a particular category of specialists or of professional and systematic philosophers. It must first be shown that all men are "philosophers", by defining the limits and characteristics of the "spontaneous philosophy" which is proper to everybody."

For Gramsci, the difference between the philosopher and other individuals is primarily 'quantitative' rather than qualitative: the former thinks with a greater degree of rigour, coherence and logicality than do the latter, but that is simply to say that he or she has amassed a greater 'quantity of qualitative elements'. 71 The philosopher's primary quantitative advantage over the people, moreover, is that unlike them he is capable of surveying the entire history of thought. 'Modern theory' (Marxism) and the 'spontaneous' beliefs of the masses, Gramsci claims, are not in opposition to each other; between the two there is a 'quantitative difference of degree, not one of quality. A reciprocal "reduction", so to speak, a passage from one to the other and vice versa, must be possible'. 72 Like Wittgenstein also, Gramsci views even the most apparently sublime concepts in an essentially practical light: his radical indeed excessive—historicism leads him to regard ideas as 'the ever-new expression of real historical development . . . Every truth, even though it may be universal and expressible in an abstract formula of the mathematical type, owes its efficacy to being expressed in the language of particular, concrete situations; if it cannot be so expressed it is a Byzantine, scholastic abstraction for phrase-mongers to toy with'. 73

The Critique of 'Commonsense'

The parallel with Wittgenstein, however, stops precisely there. For in the first place, Gramsci's historicist theory of thought rounds dialectically upon itself, in a way that Wittgenstein's philosophizing, as we have seen, dares not do: philosophy is itself a class-bound, historically determined

73 Ibid, p 201

⁷⁰ Quintin House and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (eds), Selections from the Prison Notabooks, London 1971, p. 323
⁷¹ Ibid, p. 347.

⁷² Ibid, p. 199

activity, whatever the befuddled faith of ideas that they are the products of previous ideas. In the second place, Gramsci's assertion of a continuity between philosophy and popular experience is as far removed as possible from the patrician amateurism with which the 'Narodniks of North Oxford' (Ernest Gellner) disdain any distasteful professionalism, discerning a bland continuum between examinating acts of promising and shopping at Harrod's. Gramsci's demystification of philosophy does not entail a corresponding mystification of popular consciousness: on the contrary, as Alberto Maria Cirese has argued; his attitude towards such 'folkloric' consciousness is almost always negative. 74 Gramsci's insistence of a continuity between scientific and spontaneous thought—the latter, however amorphous and implicit, can also be described as a 'conception of the world'—never underestimates the typical backwardness of such world-views, even when their characteristic difference from and conflict with 'official' ideologies is under scrutiny in his text. Popular ideology, which for Gramsci is always socially stratified, is to a great extent a client territory of the hegemonic culture, a domain into which certain 'official' scientific and philosophical concepts, distorted and displaced from context, are forever falling, to be assimilated in strange ways.

This is not to say, as Cirese points out, that Gramsci ascribes no positive value whatsoever to such doxa: the strength and tenacity of certain popular conceptions can outstrip hegemonic moralities, the class-instinct of the people can be constructive, and if some elements of popular consciousness are the mere fossilized residues of past conditions, others display 'a range of often creative and progressive innovations, spontaneously determined by the forms and conditions of life as it is developing'. 75 If the masses are seduced by a Ptolemaic' common sense—itself, in Gramsci, a carefully differentiated concept—they also have the resources of that 'good sense' which springs from popular thought's spontaneous adherence to the actual conditions of life. Indeed the masses, Gramsci argues, may be said to have two 'theoretical consciousnesses', or at least one contradictory one: one is implicit in the activity of workers in their practical transformation of the world, the other is a superficially explicit or 'verbal' consciousness uncritically inherited from the past. 76

There is some similarity here, perhaps, to Wittgenstein's counterposing of practical and metaphysical forms of knowledge. But for Gramsci, unlike Wittgenstein, implicit and explicit knowledges are in dialectical relationship: 'A philosophy of praxis . . . must be a criticism of "commonsense", basing itself initially, however, on commonsense in order to demonstrate that "everyone" is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity . . . It is a matter therefore of starting with a philosophy which already enjoys, or could enjoy, a certain diffusion,

^{74 &#}x27;Gramaci's Observations on Folklore', in Approaches to Gramus, Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed), London 1982, pp. 212-247.

75 Latteratura e veta naryomale, quoted ibid, p. 226.

⁷⁶ See Prum Netebesks, p. 333.

because it is connected to and implicit in practical life, and elaborating it so that it becomes a renewed commonsense possessing the coherence and sinew of individual philosophies. But this can only happen if the demands of cultural contact with the 'simple' are continually felt'. 77

There is no question for Gramsci, then, of philosophy leaving everything exactly as it was. The particularly virulent brand of metaphysics he confronted—Roman Catholicism—could be uprooted only by a materialist philosophy systematized and elaborated in the structures of popular culture themselves. Gramsci neither dissolves philosophy into social practice, nor like much post-structuralism displaces political radicalism into philosophy; his response to the problem of the relation between philosophy and material life is neither 'textual' nor epistemological but political, centred on those 'organic' intellectuals whose role is to materialize such a relation in their own practice. 'The relationship between commonsense and the upper level of philosophy is assured by "politics". '78

'The Fly in the Fly-Bottle'

The question Gramsci poses is still one of the most urgent for socialistintellectuals today. What are the mechanisms by which popular ideologies combine (progressive or reactionary) elements of the hegemonic culture with (progressive or reactionary) aspects of the life-experience of the masses, to produce forms of consciousness which for the most part sustain rather than challenge ruling-class hegemony? How are the chauvinism, racism, sexism and political quietism or conformism of broad sections of the masses combined with, related to or disjoint from the more creative aspects of their consciousness: a certain 'spontaneous' materialism, a distrust of and resistance to authority, a stubborn defenceof 'rights' and of a margin of autonomy, a traditional habit of tolerance (the expression 'it takes many sorts to make a world' was, Wittgenstein commented, 'a very beautiful and kindly saying'), 79 a scorn of rulingclass arrogance and parasitism, a debunking of formalism and pretentiousness, a suspicion of propaganda and paternalism, a non-obsequious respect for learning, a distaste for extravagance and the more flagrant forms of competitiveness, and a spirit of mutual support and solidarity? If a 'socialist commonsense' is to be constructed, Gramsci's theses will need to be carried into specific analyses of such ambiguities.

Listing the formal qualities which Gramsci associates with folklore or popular belief, Alberto Cirese includes contradictoriness, fragmentation, dispersal, multiplicity, unsystematicness and difference. These qualities, which might have been drawn from a dictionary of highly valued post-structuralist and Bakhtinian terms, must for Gramsci be combatted by conceptual elaboration and political systematization. His work, that is to say, not only offers an implicit rebuke to Wittgenstein; it also contains an essential corrective to the Bakhtinian notion of carnival. For carnival is, of course, a spasmodic, officially licensed affair, without the rancour, discipline and organization essential for an effective revolutionary

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 330n.

⁷⁹ Rhees, p 162

⁷⁸ Ibid, p 331

⁸⁰ Appreaches to Granssi, p 219.

politics. Any politics which predicates itself on the carnivalesque moment alone will be no more than a compliant, containable libertarianism. Bakhtin is too little attentive to the incorporating, politically defusing effects of popular humour; Gramsci, theorist of revolutionary strategy, offers a perspective within which carnival may be seen as a crucial yet partial element.

Sitting with a friend in Trafalgar Square sometime during the war, Wittgenstein pointed to Canada House and observed that such architecture took over certain rhetorical forms but said nothing in them: 'That's bombast; that's Hitler and Mussolini'. 81 His aim in philosophy, he remarks in the Investigations, is to 'teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense' (464): to demystify bombast, to return from the slippery ice where we cannot walk to the rough ground. Bertolt Brecht, in conversation with Walter Benjamin, referred to fascism as the 'new ice age'. The icy language of metaphysics, which includes the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, produces a picture which 'held up captive'. Who is held captive here? 'Russell and the parsons have done infinite harm, infinite harm.' But not only Russell and the parsons. Does Wittgenstein make reparation in the Investigations for the metaphysics, including the Tractatus, which have helped to hold captive Antonio Gramsci? 'What is your aim in philosophy?—To shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle'. (309) Who is this fly imprisoned in a fly-bottle, and how is he to be let out?

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^{\$1} Ibid, p 226.

Jeff Frieden 'The Dollar and Its Rivals'

The 1980s will be a decade of escalating conflict between Western Europe, the United States and Japan over trade, financial and monetary policies. This heightened economic competition has already revived one of the most long-standing debates in Marxism—the polemic between Lenin and Kautsky on 'ultra-imperialism'. 1 It will be recalled that Kautsky held that an increasingly international capitalist system might lead to the fusion of diverse national bourgeoisies into one, overarching international bourgeoisie—thus eliminating, as Lenin scoffed, 'the most unpleasant, the most disturbing and distasteful conflicts such as wars, political convulsions, etc.' In contrast, Lenin asserted that while 'in the abstract one can think of such a phase', in practice the consolidation of a completely international bourgeoisie is impossible. There is no doubt that the development is going in the direction of a single world trust that will swallow up all enterprises and all states without exception. . . . But the development in this direction is proceeding under such stress, with such a tempo, with such contradictions, conflicts, and convulsions—not only economical, but also political, national, etc.—that before a single world trust will be reached, before the respective national finance capitals will have formed a world union of "ultra-imperialism", imperialism will inevitably explode, capitalism will turn into its opposite.'2

Yet the prevailing opinion on the Left has been, so to speak, Kautskyite. Most have downplayed competition between imperialist nations and concentrated on some suitable proxy for the international bourgeoisie—multinational corporations, the International Monetary Fund, the Trilateral Commission. Riccardo Parboni presents a strikingly different argument.³ His new book is a powerful and well-documented analysis of the continued importance of economic conflicts between advanced capitalist countries. Indeed Parboni, of the University of Modena, ascribes the contemporary crisis precisely to such conflict: 'The stark truth is now seeping through: the crisis is not the result of so-called objective factors, but is fundamentally the fruit of a grand inter-imperialist conflict the stakes of which is the global redivision of economic and political power between the United States on the one hand and the major powers of the second world—Germany and Japan—on the other.' (p. 118)

Parboni begins The Dollar and Its Rwals with a description of the role of

¹ See Karl Kautsky, 'Ultra-Imperialism' in NLR 59 (January/February 1970) pp. 41-46

 $^{^{41-46}}$ V I Lenin, 'Introduction' to Nikolai Bukharin, *Importation and World Economy* (New York 1973). The introduction was originally written in 1915 but was not published until after the Russian Revolution.

³ Ricardo Parboni, The Dollar and Its Rivels. Recession, Inflation and International Finance, Verso/NLB, London 1981

the dollar in international monetary relations. The dollar is the world's generally accepted reserve currency, used by central banks to settle accounts and intervene in foreign exchange markets, and by many private firms to conduct international trade. The dollar therefore has an importance far out of proportion to that of the us economy—much as the pound sterling did before World War One. This state of affairs—which by definition gives the United States a disproportionately greater influence over the international monetary system—arose after World War Two, when the United States acted as a benevolent despot in providing the rest of the capitalist world with economic resources. By the late 1950s American leadership had become a somewhat less universally appreciated hegemony, and by the early 1970s the United States was unabashedly pursuing a self-interested policy which literally forced dollars on an unwilling world. The United States,' says Parboni, 'no longer provides the collective blessing of world economic stability, but instead unhesitatingly pursues its own national interest, and has thus become the principal source of perturbation of the international economy.' (p. 50)

The most important element in this perturbation, argues Parboni, is the inexorable devaluation of the dollar that began in 1970 and continued until 1979. In an attempt to halt the relative decline of United States economic might, successive American administrations have brought about a continual depreciation of the dollar, which makes American exports cheaper and other countries' exports to the United States more expensive. Other nations pay a stiff price for devaluing their currencies, since the more expensive imports fuel inflation, but since imports are relatively unimportant for the us economy, devaluation is far less inflationary than it is elsewhere. Yet the dollar devaluation led to drastic increases in world raw material prices, as well as a significant growth in world liquidity; and thus, writes Parboni, 'the international acceleration of inflation is a by-product of the continual devaluation of the dollar'. (p. 86)

At the same time, the dollar devaluation is—in Parboni's view—the direct cause of European economic stagnation. This is so because Germany's response to increased us competition was to step up its export drive by extending cheap credits to potential customers and by improving the technological quality of German manufactured goods. Both prongs of Germany's export strategy—cheap credits and industrial restructuring—require domestic deflation. In order to maintain its international competitiveness, Germany is forced into domestic recession, and because the rest of Europe is dependent on German orders, Europe is forced into recession along with Germany. Parboni summarizes his argument in a passage worth reproducing: 'The United States and Germany, in conflict over the maintenance of industrial and technological leadership, join together in the commercial exploitation of the rest of the world. The consequence of this imperialist relationship of competition and alliance is the demotion of Europe to conditions of direct subordination to the exigencies of German capitalist development, both internal and multinational. The European countries, subjected to a heavy drain of resources because of the rise in the cost of oil, and unable to increase their exports because of

their relative technological backwardness and their poverty of financial resources, are now witnessing the evaporation of their prospects for development of the national income and return to full employment.' (pp. 138–139)

In this context, the European Monetary System is a major link in the chain of German domination over the rest of Europe. Parboni, indeed, compares Germany's position within the EMS to the US role in the postwar Bretton Woods system: one of profound assymetry. 'The assymetry,' writes Parboni, 'lies in the fact that under the EMS... there are no effective means by which to compel a strong-currency country [such as Germany] to weaken its currency, but the weak-currency countries [such as France and Italy] are compelled to strengthen theirs.' (p. 149) The EMS will thus draw the rest of Europe into a fundamentally unequal dependence on Germany, while strengthening Germany's hand in its conflict with the United States.

Parboni completes his survey with a discussion of long-term, structural changes in the world economy. Industrial production has been shifting rapidly from the advanced capitalist world into the 'newly industrializing countries' (NICS) of the Third World. Much of this development was concentrated in a small grouping of reactionary NICs that 'were rewarded for their subordination to the international division of labour imposed by the metropolitan countries and received considerable foreign investment and credit financing' (p. 192)—while what Parboni calls the 'independent developing countries' such as India pursued more autonomous paths. In any event, Third World industrial development—largely financed by private international banks—is supplanting traditional industries in Europe and North America. 'The modification of the international division of labour now under way,' Parboni argues, 'renders the crisis of the industrialized countries chronic: it is therefore correct to say that the interminable crisis suffered by the European and Japanese economies is structural.' (p. 178) The capitalist world is, in short, coming to the end of one era—economic expansion under us hegemony—and entering another of austerity, of 'the wildcat capitalism of the industrial revolution, of unbridled cartelization, of imperialism, of world wars' (p. 206).

As is evident from this brief summary, The Dollar and Its Rivals is nothing less than an attempt to reinterpret postwar economic developments from the standpoint of international monetary relations. If there is a theme that runs throughout Parboni's book it is that conflict among national imperialisms is very much alive and that it is in the sphere of currency competition that such conflict expresses itself most clearly. This is so because 'the protagonists of the international economy consist of national states, and not families and firms' (p. 26), and national states are by definition charged with managing national currencies. Since each state represents its national (bourgeois) interests and its readiest tool in the international economy is its own currency, it is only natural that intra-imperialist rivalry will play itself out prominently on the world's foreign currency markets.

Parboni's is a coherent, well-reasoned study. Anyone with an interest

in international economic affairs—and that covers an increasingly wide potential audience—should read *The Dollar and Its Rivals*. Perhaps Parboni's single most important contribution, however, is not the book itself but the opportunity it provides for Marxist analysts to move forward their discussions of the international economy, for Parboni raises many significant questions.

Class-Fractions and the Roots of Imperialism

In what follows I would like to indicate, however briefly, a few of my own reactions to Parboni's theses—again, in the interest of stimulating long-overdue discussions. Two of my comments are specific in nature; one is more generally theoretical.

The most obvious of Parboni's failings is in his predictive power. In one of the original essays, presumably written in 1979, he states categorically that 'as far as the dollar is concerned, there is little doubt that objective conditions will tend to maintain its downward trend relative to [the] mark, at least for several years' (p. 163). In reality, of course, the dollar has strengthened considerably as a result of soaring us interest rates; between June 1979 and June 1982 the Deutschemark fell from 53.6 cents to 41.0 cents, a drop of some 23% (or, what is the same thing, the DM/\$ rate went from 1.86 to 2.44). More generally, the trade-weighted exchange value of the dollar is now higher than it was way back in June 1970 when the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates began to unravel. Parboni does try to deal with this turn of events in his 1981 Preface to the English Edition, but he does not succeed in vindicating his earlier argument. If the dollar devaluation was a clear expression of America's economic offensive, then a dollar revaluation should signal a return to American benevolence, a position hardly worth defending. If the rise of the dollar over the past three years is on the other hand a change in America's strategy of domination, Parboni needs to explain why such a change was necessary, and how it succeeds in preserving American strength. If after all dollar devaluation was meant to restore us economic might, what is a dollar revaluation supposed to achieve?

A second area where Parboni's analysis lacks depth is in the Third World. Parboni divides the less developed countries into two groups, dependent and independent. He argues that the various national, regional, and international initiatives generally linked to the demand for a New International Economic Order succeeded in solidifying a phalanx of independent, non-aligned LDCs (less developed countries), of which India is his paragon and, indeed, only specific example. Other LDCs, the dependent ones, sold their autonomy for a mess of integration into international trade and investment and 'opted for economic subordination' (p. 191). Here Parboni cites the cases of Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Yet it seems to me that Parboni's classification is based almost entirely on his distaste for the political bent of his 'dependent' LDCs. Brazil's regime may be less politically palatable to Parboni than India's, Tanzania's, or Peru's, and of course the patterns of economic development in these nations differ widely,

but to call Brazilian capitalism dependent and Indian or Tanzanian capitalism independent is surely shallow.

More generally, Parboni leaves himself open to criticism by hewing very closely to what might be called a 'statist' approach to international economic relations. In line with his view that states are virtually the only relevant unit of analysis in the international economy, Parboni downplays the role of private actors both domestically and internationally. He speaks, for example, of us trade policy as seeking 'the total and unconditional assertion of American interests by any means necessary' (p. 20), and remarks in passing that 'during the nineteenth century Britain suffered a decline similar to that which the United States has begun to experience' (p. 96). While there is a germ of truth here—Britain did decline, us trade policy has become more nationalistic-Parboni's single-minded focus on states as monolithic representatives of monolithic bourgeoisies, on nations which decline and nations which become more nationalistic, confuses more than it clarifies. There are segments of the us business community, after all, that are as appalled by increasing us protectionism as are the Europeans. American-based international banks, to take one example, are strong supporters of increased access of LDC goods to us markets, for the simple reason that the LDCs in question are the banks' clients. A significant segment of us capital is perfectly happy to see the American steel industry shrink under the weight of foreign competition, just as the current high interest rates/strong dollar policy is immensely unpopular with other sectors of capital.

So too is talk of the decline of Britain, which Parboni correctly ascribes at least in part to the overvalued pound, incomplete without a recognition of the different British interests at stake. The City, Britain's financial establishment, was very much in favour of a strong pound in order to protect the value of its sterling-denominated overseas investments—and thus virtually forced Britain's 1925 return to gold at an absurdly overvalued parity. The City had little or no concern for the effects of the strong pound on British industry's export capacity, just as America's Wall Street is single-mindedly concerned with bringing inflation down (with the ensuing high interest rates and strong dollar) regardless of the impact on such domestic industrial sectors as steel, auto, and housing construction.

What I am trying to indicate with these telegraphic illustrations is simply that it is misleading to speak of a unified national bourgeois interest expressing itself in the international economic arena—certainly in the case of the United States. Certain fractions of the American bourgeoisie are dynamic, internationally competitive, aggressive free-traders—remembering Bismarck's dictum that free trade is the weapon of the strong. Other sectors are stagnant, internationally uncompetitive and protectionist. American high finance strongly favours the Administration-induced high interest rates to bring inflation down, strengthen the dollar, and force industrial restructuring. On the other hand, many more us industries would far rather risk inflation than debt-induced bankruptcy, and find

that a strong dollar, which cheapens American imports while it makes exports dearer, is exacerbating the problem of foreign competition.

Parboni is right to emphasize the permanence and importance of intra-imperialist conflict. He is also correct to insist on the continued primacy of states in international economic affairs. Parboni, in short, does an excellent job of demolishing the notion of international imperialism as an undifferentiated mass. He demonstrates the significance of conflict among competing imperialisms where others have naively, perniciously, seen only a transcendental battle between evil (the multinationals, the banks, the mr) and good (everyone else). Yet in constructing this corrective Parboni has himself pictured national imperialisms as seemless and undifferentiated. This very popular approach has indeed led some political activists to consider as progressive any policy initiative opposed by the dominant section of capital. Thus major portions of the Left in Europe and North America have embraced a sort of Left protectionism which appears to be militantly anti-capitalist-since Wall Street, the City, and other financial oligarchies oppose it—but which is in reality a bid to rescue the declining sectors of the industrial bourgeoisie. If we want to develop and maintain a truly alternative economic strategy, we must be well aware of the origin and significance of competing capitalist panaceas. To do so we need a fully-rounded analysis of contemporary capitalism which takes into account both international and domestic factors, and both public and private actors.

Roland Barthes

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As 1982 nears its end, Thatcher and Reagan join in proclaiming the 'defeat' of inflation. Its price has been the creation of a vast swathe of global unemployment: thirty-two million in the OECD core, hundreds of millions more in the Third World. The stagflation of the 1970s has issued into a world depression in the 1980s. Whether or not the international financial system, strained by over half a trillion dollars of uncollectable debt, actually 'collapses'—as recently predicted by a former Chancellor of the Exchequer as well as by an ex-President of the IMF—the current slump has already assumed unprecedented universality. Whereas the great depression of the 1930s had its specific epicentres in the United States and Germany, with uneven effects in parts of the colonial world and positive counter-examples in Keynesian Sweden and Stalinist Russia, the present crisis is synchronized by the increasingly desperate tributary demands of the great international banks within an incomparably more integrated world system of production. From Stockholm to São Paulo to Sydney, there are few exemptions to the worldwide pattern of braked growth and monetary instability; the long postwar wave of capitalist expansion has finally ground to a halt.

As was the case half a century ago, depression—and the sharpening of social and national struggles it brings with it—raises the dangers of regional and world wars to a new acuity. For the past two years NLR has given priority to a wide-ranging discussion of the arms race and the politics of the new peace movements. It is now imperative to complement this debate with systematic explorations of the nature of the present world economic crisis and its likely effects on the New Cold War, Third World revolution and the social-democratic integration of the labour movement in Western Europe.

As a contribution to such a discussion we print a wide-ranging and provocative analysis of the 'cohesion of the crisis' by the French Marxist Michel Aglietta, author of the influential study of the US economy, 'A Theory of Capitalist Regulation' (NLB 1979). In contrast to various attempts to explain the crisis at the level of a general 'capital logic' or homogeneous international order, Aglietta insists on the need for an approach that is at once historical and comparative. The capitalist world economy, he argues, should be seen as a hierarchic structure of interacting national growth systems, unified under a specific imperial hegemony and corresponding monetary sovereignty. The forms of that

sovereignty have varied with the locus of hegemony, with quite distinc consequences for the patterns of capital accumulation. Thus, eschewing any simple analogy between Peelite Free Trade and the Bretton Woods system, he shows how the respective hegemonies of Victorian Britain and the postwar United States involved fundamentally opposite princi ples of macroeconomic interaction between the leading capitalis economies. British hegemony solidified an international portfolio economy based on a vertical division of labour between industry and agriculture, exemplified in the relationship between metropolitan Eur ope and its settler-colonial offshoots. Rhythms of accumulation were subordinated to fluctuations of the sterling rate in London whicl imposed the priority of an international monetary constraint over the tempo of national economies. By contrast, American hegemony wa largely founded upon the diffusion of mass production technologies and the expansion of trade between the advanced capitalist countries eventually leading to the internationalization of manufacturing outpu through the rise of a new, horizontal (i.e., intra-branch) division o labour. Yet at the same time, the US economy's relatively low level o export specialization (compared to its gigantic internal market), as wel as the increased postwar autonomy and integration of national financia systems, ensured a desynchronization of business cycles—unfettering the operation of local demand-management by central banks. In Europe this system of international regulation allowed the emergence, in the early sixties, of a set of complementary and self-reinforcing 'virtuou circles' of growth between the strong currency economies of Northern Europe (excepting Britain) and the high-growth economies of Southern Europe.

In Aglietta's view, the stability of this structure of intensive accumu lation was eventually undermined by its very success in generalizing a high-productivity model of production linked to mass consumer durable consumption within the OECD bloc. The tendential convergence of the industrial structures of the principal capitalist economies slowly eroded the national differentials which once stimulated complementary growth. This creeping contradiction was then massively overdetermined by, on one hand, the disruptive effects of American inflationary growth—especially since the multinationalization of US manufacturing was accompanied by a 'tertiarization' of the domestic economy; and, or the other, by Japan's relative impermeability to imports, which upset the entire world trade equilibrium. The oil price shock waves of 1974–75 and 1978–79 brought these crisis tendencies to a head, distorting the structure of international demand and polarizing surplus and deficit countries.

Unlike the great depressions of the 1890s and 1930s, however, the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system in the 1970s did not lead to an immediate and massive deflation. On the contrary, it spurred an immense expansion of world credit—the deceleration of which we are only now experiencing. Perhaps the most original aspect of Aglietta's analysis is his description of the emergence of this 'international debt economy' based especially on private money markets beyond the regulation of any national state. Although the dollar retains its preponderance as a means of circulation, the instability of its reserve functions has precipitated rivalries amongst convertible currencies which further disrupt the interconnexion of the major economies and turn yesterday's 'virtuous circles' of growth into today's 'vicious circles' of stagnation/hyperinflation.

Finally Aglietta sketches, with bold strokes, some of the more likely outcomes to the world crisis in the medium-term future. Two of his scenarios-prolonged stagflation and financial collapse (which he considers quite possible)—project current tendencies toward the fragmentation of the world economy forward to the prospect of eventual protectionist blocs reminiscent of the trade autarky of the 1930s. A third alternative—the shift of the centre of gravity of the world economy to the Pacific Basin and the rise of a yen-dollar monetary regime—raised the spectre of West European peripheralization in the face of Japanese and American dominance in the new technologies. A fourth scenario—European industrial renaissance based on the widespread adoption of a modernized, social-democratic interventionism—expresses the hopes of groups within the Mitterrand regime. Aglietta's conjecture of a European capacity to pioneer a way out of the Depression through the construction of a truly tripolar world order is not without its analogies in the identification by Edward Thompson of Europe as the 'weak link' in the Cold War.

For the moment, however, such prescriptions, as well as the powerful analysis which sustains them, remain almost mute as to the role of the class struggle within the labour process—the key theme of Aglietta's earlier work. Yet it is clear that in both the genesis of the crisis and the arbitration of its outcome the power of the working class remains the decisive variable. The recent evolution of the French Socialist Party in office does not augur well for hopes of reflation in one country or the creation of an inter-class consensus around reindustrialization. In order to defend its investment priorities and appease private capital (which still controls three-quarters of industry), the Mitterrand government—

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like the Wilson-Callaghan administrations before it—is now seeking to impose welfare cutbacks and austerity measures, many of which are even harsher than those of its conservative forerunners.

Thus all across Western Europe a great test of strength is looming between the organized working class and the combined forces of the employers' offensive and the capitalist state. Meanwhile, as Mike Davis suggests in this issue's Scanner, the headlong retreat of the American unions before Reaganomics risks having a demonstration effect on Western Europe. For the failure of US trade unions to penetrate the burgeoning 'information economy' or to solidarize with the mass of low-wage workers threatens the future of organized labour in the United States as such.

The year 1982 has finally seen the passing, so long awaited, of the two most powerful members of the Soviet Politburo over the past fifteen years—Leonid Brezhnev and Mikhail Suslov. The death of Brezhnev, Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the CPSU and President of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, has naturally been the overwhelming focus of commentary in the Western media. His rule, however, was less personal than those of his predecessors-institutionally embedded, as it was, in a dense collegial stratum of senior functionaries formed in the same epoch as himself. The most significant, yet also most shadowy of these was always Suslov-whose decease provided the critical stepping-stone in January that allowed Andropov to secure the succession to Brezhnev himself in December. In this issue, Roy Medvedev writes a caustic obituary of this most durable of all the veterans of the Stalinist generation of the thirties. His posthumous cameo of the 'chief ideologue' of the USSR in the sixties and seventies supplies a suggestive yardstick against which to view the future career of the new. occupant of supreme ideological and political authority in Russia.

Next spring Verso/NLB will publish 'Signs Taken For Wonders', a set of studies on the 'high' and 'mass' literature of the modern period by the Italian critic Franco Moretti. Here we publish his incisive essay on the literature of terror as exemplified by its two best-known works, 'Frankenstein' and 'Dracula'. Linking sociological, rhetorical and psychoanalytic methods in a single argument, Moretti considers the legendary monsters as metaphors for the two extremes of capitalist society: Shelley's misshapen creation a fearful image of the new industrial proletariat, Stoker's count a displaced portrayal of the monopolist threat to late Victorian preeminence. He concludes with reflections on the coercive organicism of this literary 'strategy of terror'.

World Capitalism in the Eighties

The main currents of thought on world economic problems can be distinguished from one another, amongst other things, by the precise importance they attach to the national dimension. For neo-classicists, as well as for supporters of the 'globalist' ideology propagated by the multinationals and transmitted by the communications media, there is a one-way process of the unification of economic relations. The absolute primacy accorded to the private subject over all forms of collective organization encourages a view of the nation as a mere historical remnant. Spatial heterogeneity is conceived as exogenous to the impulse towards the realization of a general market equilibrium: i.e., as an initial disposition of resources not chosen by economic subjects or as an obstacle to trade in the factors or products of production. Indeed, the neo-classical theory of international relations is nothing other than a theory of the tendential dissolution of this spatial heterogeneity and its replacement by the homogeneous space of 'pure' market relations on a world scale.

This article starts from different premisses. In contrast to the neo-classical démarche, it bases itself on the primacy of the national dimension and regards the world economy as a system of interacting national social formations. Always alive amongst French economists, Marxist and non-Marxist, this approach focuses more on historical studies and upon the uneven influences which nations exert upon one another. Its aims are to elucidate the conditions through which one nation exercises hegemony over others, to show why such hegemony is a cohesive principle in international relations, to analyse the reasons for the decline of hegemonies, and to link this with the recurrent crises affecting international relations in general.

The theoretical salience of the nation-state in economic analysis is often equated exclusively with mercantilist or physiocratic doctrines; in fact, it is also part and parcel of the classical tradition. For example, Ricardo's analysis of international relations takes as its starting point the proposition that the formation of value under capitalism occurs within nationally specific conditions. He therefore argued that each country has a distinctive basket of goods which comprise the real wage, as well as characteristic difficulties in producing the wage-goods upon which the rate of profit depends. Market mechanisms are not automatically capable of effacing, even in the long-run, these national specificities. Economic history has ratified the general validity of this theoretical position by showing that there is no long-term trend for international relations to be harmonized through the homogenization of national economies and the equalization of growth rates. Indeed, epochs of rapidly expanding world trade and relative monetary stability coincide with the persistence of national differentiations. Far from indicating the success of a unifying tendency among national economies, convergences in conditions of production usually tend to fuel masked or violent rivalries whose outcome is not determined in advance. It is this uncertainty which allows us to speak of crisis in the strong sense of the term.

The conception of the world economy inspiring this article emphasizes this dimension of recurrent disequilibrium and the accumulation of tensions that derive from the ultimate incompatibility of national modes of regulation. Hegemony is seen as the principal form of cohesion within a system of nations; and hierarchy, dynamically understood, is considered to strengthen the stability of a complex, open system. These are presuppositions of a series of theoretical schemas which attempt to explain the roots of postwar us hegemony, the associated forms of macroeconomic adjustment, the factors of instability that appeared in the 1970s, and the new conjuncture that established itself at the beginning of the 1980s. Finally, in a more speculative vein, I consider whether the seeds of a new reorganization of the capitalist world economy can be detected and compare several hypothetical scenarios of the course that the crisis may yet take.

I. The Era of American Hegemony

In this section we shall try to identify the international conditions which underpinned the regularities of Western growth from the Korean War to the end of the sixties. First we must raise the question of the existence of a

system of international economic 'regulation'. That is, can we speak of international institutions or of procedures tacitly recognized by the leading capitalist states—which give a precise form to international monetary constraints and therefore influence the kind of adjustment made to changes in the balance of payments? Moreover, are the forms of international monetary regulation structurally correlated with underlying tendencies of accumulation in the heartlands of the world economy: with extensive or intensive accumulation, with a relative orientation to internal or external markets, with reliance upon vertical or horizontal international divisions of labour, and so on? A historical, comparative approach is the most fruitful way of tackling these questions, and it is helpful to make a summary comparison between the postwar system of growth under American hegemony with the previous system that blossomed under British hegemony in the second half of the nineteenth century. Synoptic Table I sets out the major structural differences between the two types of regulation; relating these differences to specific divisions of labour and forms of the internationalization of capital as well as enunciating the principal characteristic articulations of the international economy in each type of regulation.

The table reveals that the respective principles of international macroeconomic interaction within each hegemony are fundamentally opposite in character. The two most crucial differences are:

(a) The opposition between the macroeconomic adjustments typical of competitive regulation and monopolistic regulation in the dominant economics, with regard to relations both between prices and nominal wages, and between production and employment. The main line of differentiation within the productive sector is also very different. In competitive regulation it separates agriculture from industry. The rhythm of industrial growth here critically depends upon a relative decline in the prices of agricultural goods sold to the proletariat of industrial regions. The degree of agricultural protectionism is a key factor in national structure-preferences and determines the size of rents. These rents, however, produce a high level of savings, which, according to the country, are either garnered by the merchant banks and placed in the circuits of international finance or else received by the institutions financing national industry and boosting its export production capacity. In this way, the industrial or financial valorization of capital is oriented towards international trade.

In monopolistic regulation, by contrast, the essential cleavage is between, on the one hand, an industry ever more dependent upon internationally imposed conditions of production and the high level of branch integration among industrialized countries, and, on the other hand, a huge area of social reproduction activity created by the generalization of wage-labour. To a large, though nationally differentiated degree, the revenue-circuit within each country escapes international financial circulation may come into conflict with financial constraints internal to the national economy. Such a clash was impossible under competitive regulation, where the latter were subordinate to the former. This is why monopolistic regulation produces structural balance-of-payments problems linked to considerable national autonomy in the rhythms of capital

Table I: Elements of International Cohesion of the Growth Systems at Their Maturity

Structures	4
Form of Internal Regulation	COMPETITIVE (n
dess Pattern of Speculization	Vertical (Inter-brase countries/settler zone

Modes of Internationality ation of Capital

International Financial Intermodulina

Monetary System

International Structure of Short-Term Claims and Dobts

British Hegemony

COMPETITIVE (nominal prices and incomes heavily effected by fluctuations in production)

Verteal (Inter-branch) dreams of labour. Buropean countries/settler zones, manufactures/raw materials

Long-term export of capital/high internal gross fixed capital formation (GPGP), export of finance capital from Burope to the settler zones, emigration of Buropean labous, separation of the French, German, and Britah capital-export zones

Dominant mechanism: finance market. Strong financial centralization in London International perfets economy. Do jury the gold standard. Do jury pound sterling as the international means of payment, fixed trade-patterns between

Foreign prass banks have liquid sasers with British banks, these sasets are both means of international finance and a liquidity buffer in case of ensist—the foreign private banks securerly have a sterling credit balance.

capital-exporting countries.

Randi. The Londoin rate of interest is the preponderant factor for abort-term capital held by non-readenti. It exerts a stabilizing influence on the balance of payments. Hegemony is expressed through the asymmetric influence of the Bank of England discounting rate upon princit steriling assets Variations in the London rate of interest have a preponderant influence upon foreign banks, even if it is not directly reflected in the monetary policy of other countries.

US Hegemony

MONOPOLISTIC (nominal prices and incomes little affected by fluctuations in production)

Horrestal (Intra-branch) divines of Lobert between industrialized capitalist countries, diversification in manufacturing industry.

Long-term export of capital/low internal offers; direct company investment, mainly from the Usa to Europe; immigration of abour from Third World; interpenetration of capital within transmittenal companies.

Dominant mechanism: public loans, then decentralized bank credits. International Add? economy

Do pure: the dollar-gold standard. Do facts: dollar as the international means of payment, flexible trade between the industrialized countries.

The stability of the monetary systems of other large countries is not dependent upon pravite-bank holdings of us dollars—non-residents are frw to convert their sisters into dollars.

Result or interest rates do not necessarily have a unilinear and stabilising influence upon the short-term flow of private captual Accumulation of affert dollar claims by the monetary instruments of surplus countries. Hegemony is expressed through socceptance of this kind of assets, which finance the rate bild of the stability delay.

Regulation of the Balance of Personats

Long-term export of capital derived from an excess of savings over internal employment of capital Binaus's capital exports and internal opers are set set of pleas with each other Regular flow of revenue from abroad A trade balance sensitive to the rhythm of internal accumulation.

Ranth: A compensatory trend of the trade balance and the balance of operations linked to long-term capital. The materipage balance bodis up well against conjunctional functions.

Factors Determining the Trade-Balance Transle of the Heginesis Country

The terms of trade between manufactures and raw materials are largely based upon trade between Butain and the new settler zones. The terms of trade vary synchronically with the rhythm of accumulation in Britain, and inversely with the rhythm in settler zones.

Result Britain's terms of trade more as appeals directive to the rate of polaries described accountiation follows opposite cycles in Britain and the settler xones. The alternating movements of the terms of trade therefore have an effect upon the trade imbalances (in value) cushioned by the alternating movements of accompliation. The residual instability is thrown onto peripheral areas of the British Empire and the countries of southern Europe.

There is clus interaction between: (a) the downward flexibility of nominal wages and prices in a downtum of industrial production; and (b) the polarization of Europe's money markets expressed in the distribution of liquid stretting assets held by private banks

Short-Torm Adjustments

Result: A rung naturati-rate in London provodes a contraction of internal rada throughout Europe Falling credit is soon reflected in declining production.

Clear synchronization of conjunctions. Recurrent large-scale fluctuations constitute an international business cycle Simultaneous variations in production reduce the surpluses and deficits in external monotoxy positions.

Flows of public capital are independent of us internal accumulation. Direct investment is in place with internal opers and largely financed out of loans. Revenue flows depend upon company policy on the reparation of profits from abroad.

Rankler. The long-term capital balance is largely sutonomous of the trade balance. The balance of operations linked to long-term capital tends to be negative. The stability of the US balance depends spon the expectly is realize a lage-terplas trade balance at the length of the conjunction, or spon the measteness of a growth transcin.

The terms of trade between industrialized countries are markedly constant. Declaining terms of trade between raw materials and manufactures.

Result The Us trade belones chafty depends spon the resease-electricity and differential gravith-rates in the UsA and its near industrial gravith-rates in the UsA and its near industrial result. A pattern tends to be established in the trade surpluses and defects of the industrialized countries. It loses its shape insofar as the loss of us preponderance redistributes the trade flows. The developing countries suffer structural defects which cental growing financial dependence.

There is an extension of national macroeconomic conditions:

(a) in the formation of incomes and very many pinces (sheltered sector); and (b) in the offsets of money (the size of claims on the state and of pinvate credit independent of international trade)

The result is a degradorant area of conjunctors. The supply of international means of payment depends on fluctuations in the us balance of payments. The repercussions for other countries depend upon their monetary policy: a change in dollar-parity, or an adjustment to the rate of growth of internal money-supply in tune with the absorption or reabsorption of dollar-

accumulation. By contrast, competitive regulation followed the alternating rhythm of industrial accumulation within the dominant countries and capital exports to zones varying with the exporting country. Capital accumulation therefore had an international cohesion which produced, within the capitalist countries of Europe, that famous pulsation of the industrial reserve army analysed by Marx. As for the social cohesion of countries so tightly subject to an international rhythm, the crucial 'safety-valve' was the European emigration to new settlements which faithfully accompanied the export of capital.

(b) Structural differences in the monetary system are another decisive point of differentiation between the two types of regulation. In both cases, there are dense banking relations between the large nations of the capitalist world. In competitive regulation, however, the banks had poorly protected liabilities and were open to a loss of confidence that could provoke a massive withdrawal of deposits. Their soundness therefore critically depended upon the structure of assets, or, more specifically, upon the proportion of total assets composed of immediately negotiable claims. Least negotiable were the sterling bills of exchange issued to finance international trade and discountable in London. Since their value was directly influenced by the rate of interest on the London money market, any rise in this leader-rate would reduce the value of the liabilities by which banks defended their liquidity. It therefore had a strong and immediate effect upon British and foreign banks as a whole. All contemporary observers, as well as later historians, have noted the lightning spread of financial tensions and the virtually simultaneous turn-around in credit accompanying variations in the London rate of interest. This conjunctural interdependence stemmed from the mode of expression of monetary constraint: from the fact that such constraint was international before being national.

By contrast, the structural transformations inherent in monopolistic regulation have fundamentally altered the strength of banks. It is no longer conceivable that a country's entire banking system should be threatened by a general loss of confidence, precipitating a massive conversion of deposits into a money-form outside the bank-money aggregate of that country. Indeed, in most banking systems, individual banks are protected against such a misfortune. Only the heterogeneous us banking system, which includes the competition of a multiplicity of financial intermediaries less tightly regulated than the banks, is exposed to risks of non-intervention. Still, the consequences are limited by the safety which most depositors enjoy. Such nationally integrated banking systems have a capacity for credit expansion that is little affected by the rate of interest on the money market, even though that market remains subject to international influences. Thus, it is not only possible but quite normal for tensions to arise out of conjunctural imbalances between the dominant nations. These are expressed in a distribution of balance-of-payments surpluses and deficits—a mediated form of international constraint. There is, in fact, a two-fold mediation: on the one hand, the international constraint gradually asserts itself by influencing the system of internal moneycreation, which in turn influences the country's income-formation and external competitiveness; on the other hand, the impact of persistent constraint is neither unilinear nor automatic, since it is but one of the forces moulding the ongoing process of compromise between the goals and operational instruments of monetary policy.

Thus any exact analysis of the international cohesion of the postwar system of growth, and hence any interpretation of the major crisis features which developed in the 1970s, will essentially involve a study of the interactions between the balance of payments of the dominant economies. These interactions will in turn only become clear if they are closely and precisely linked to the national conditions of accumulation which explain each country's structure-preferences. At a monetary level, these interactions express themselves in a number of significant payment balances and influence the formation of exchange-rates. If we are to account for their structural character, however, we must relate the conditions of internal accumulation to the parameters of international specialization for each dominant country.

International capital flows will only favour the compatibility of national growth schemas if they are inserted into a model of the international division of labour. Such a model establishes stable differentiations which materialize in product specialization. This, in fact, is the real linchpin of the world economy que system. The unity of the capitalist world economy is not a state of equilibrium. It is the process whereby the growth systems of the major capitalist countries which express national structure preferences (i.e., the pattern of social relations and the institutions regulating their conflict) deepen a single model of the international division of labour by developing strong complementarities. Historical experience showed that a hierarchical pattern has so far always emerged in those complementary relations among sovereign nations which are capable of reproducing themselves in a temporality beyond the economic horizon of investments. Thus, in the era of British hegemony over the world economy, the major complementary relations opposed Europe to the settler zones, made the manufactures/raw materials separation primary in the international division of labour, and greatly limited any overlap in the destination of long-term capital exports from European countries.

The nature of international complementarities allows us to formulate empirically verifiable hypotheses concerning the international macroeconomic relations central to the problem of the unity of the world economy: the relationship between internal and external accumulation of the industrial capital whose ownership is controlled by capitalists of a single nation; the relationship between capital formation and the terms of trade; variations which offset or reinforce the components of the underlying balance. Short-term currency changes absorb transitive constraints or accumulate tensions according to the polarizing or compensatory tendencies which act upon the underlying balances. However, international monetary relations do not simply reflect these tendencies. National banking systems are the nodal point for the structure of claims and debts arising out of international operations and internal sources of money creation. The degree of autonomy of national monetary rules is determined by the way in which the banks' international claims and liabilities affect the creation-destruction of money in the national banking system. A balance-of-payments problem identified as

such—that is, a lasting deterioration in the external monetary position of the banking system—only exists if the deficit does not call into question the very solvency of that system. Otherwise, internal monetary rules are directly governed by the banks' net loss of foreign assets. In its turn, the autonomy of national monetary rules determines the sensitivity of internal credit to international constraint, and hence the scale of fluctuation in economic activity and the speed with which it responds to jolts in the underlying balance.

International Cohesion under Monopolistic Regulation

It follows from what has been said so far that the surplus-and-deficit structure between the major capitalist countries chiefly depends upon internal trends in capital accumulation and their effect on productivity. Yet these national systems of accumulation can only cohere with one another if international financial strains do not systematically accumulate in the same direction. For this to be so, it is necessary that the surplus-and-deficit structure in the underlying balances of the dominant economies should not be continually polarized. More precisely, polarization should not induce the economic agents of surplus countries to acquire assets in the financial systems of deficit countries when a major question-mark hangs over their returns—a problem that arises in so far as such assets do not allow non-resident creditors to have a significant influence upon the economic policy of the deficit country. The degree to which national monetary authorities are autonomous of non-residents is therefore a crucial question.

An initial mode of constraint clearance, implicit in the hierarchical pattern of international relations, is to unload the deficits onto semi-peripheral countries (Southern Europe, the industrialized countries of Latin America) or the developing countries (apart from oil-producers). If we look at the structure of world surpluses and deficits since the early 1960s, we find that the deficits of developing countries and the nine-member HEC do not represent a higher proportion of world trade than they did in 1962. Since these countries have anyway tended to grow faster in the 1970s than in the 1960s, the oil price rise has played only a strictly limited role in their debt level. What has changed is the composition of their liabilities. Thus, debts to the international banks, contracted on the terms of the international money market with a differential risk premium, have tended to displace transfers of public funds (non-refundable aid, preferential loans) and direct investment by transpational companies.

As we have indicated, however, the impact of financial constraints upon the weakest debtors—a constant feature of capitalism—is far from being the essential principle underlying the cohesion of international economic relations. The crucial difference between the early sixties and the second half of the seventies is to be found elsewhere: in the dramatic shift of the United States from an underlying surplus balance with only minor fluctuations to a deficit trend displaying major variations; in the systematic polarization of large surpluses and deficits, against the balances of the first half of the sixties which represented only a small proportion of world trade; and in the gradual emergence of privately organized international credit which eludes monetary regulation by any

central bank and essentially operates in dollars (so that international use of the dollar is disconnected from the waning preponderance of the us economy). Thus, the decisive decline of the cohesive factors provided by us hegemony may be precisely located in the second half of the sixties. During that watershed period, the balance-of-payments constraint inherent in the Bretton Woods monetary system gave way to a new epoch of currency rivalry which affected at least the reserve function, if not all the other international monetary functions.

Once we have understood the cohesion of international relations in the accumulation system marking the mature phase of monopolistic regulation, we can grasp how the postwar accumulation of capital was able to evolve national structure-preferences in the major countries without setting up polarized surplus-and-deficit patterns. At first sight, nothing would seem harder to explain. For each epoch-defining mode of capitalist regulation involves the emergence of a hegemonic centre, followed by an uneven spread of that mode's principles which undermines the original hegemony. In competitive regulation, cohesion was assured only in so far as the economic agents of all industrial nations accepted the direct monetary constraint imposed by London. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the guiding conjunctural role of the London interest rate was ever more disturbed by a series of new phenomena: the strengthening of German banking structures; the huge concentration of capital in the United States, forming industrial groups with a solid financial base; the growing insensitivity of nominal prices and incomes to a shrinkage of credit; and the direct clash between the great powers for a redivision of world markets. In monopolistic regulation, financial interdependence plays a less exacting role. But it is still necessary that the uneven growth of nations should not pile up liquid claims and liabilities to the point where they threaten the monetary expression of national structure-preferences (i.e., the ever more inflationary rules controlling the struggle over income distribution within each country). If that point is reached, the strain of international financial imbalances will no longer be compatible with national social cohesion. Since this last factor is the ground of monopolistic regulation, it is the international monetary rules which have had to yield.

The Role of US Balance of Payments

The preponderance of the United States ushered in a novel form of international relations. For the first time in the history of capitalism, a growth-pole rose to hegemony in international trade without itself turning outward—a particularly curious development from a financial point of view. After the Second World War, the us banking system was quite incapable of using the New York market to reorganize the financial circuits that could revive international trade. Three major obstacles stood in the way: the highly fragmented structure of the banking system; the New Deal regulations which tightly restricted the financial operations of various deposit institutions; and the complete lack of experience in risk-evaluation and managerial autonomy vis-à-vis direct shareholders' interests, both crucial to a mediating role in international financial circulation.

This characteristic of the Us finance system was an extreme instance of something more profound. The huge Us economy acquired its dominant position by reducing, and not heightening, its product specialization and the share of international trade in the national product. After the First World War, autonomous development of the Us economy destroyed the old international division of labour, both through the technological advances it generated and through the vertical industrial integration achieved by its big corporations. The London-based international portfolio economy simply disappeared, along with the mutual dependence of British and foreign banks on which the delicate mechanism of international trade had depended.

It cannot be overemphasized that there is no universal mechanism of international adjustment on which a remodelled hierarchy of nations can be simply grafted, us preponderance brought a new type of international division of labour and new modes of regulating the balances of payments. us economic autonomy was expressed in the formation of internal prices and incomes that did not depend upon those of rival nations, in the overwhelming importance of overall internal demand compared with external trade, and in the insensitivity of economic policy to balance-ofpayments variations. The US balance of payments was the resultant of two sets of largely disconnected determinations: the internal tendencies of global us growth and the impact on us trade of overseas industrial development, largely stimulated in Western Europe by the internationalization of American corporations. At that time, however, London was the only foreign finance market capable of international activity, while the international overseas operations of us banks were entirely driven by internationalization of their American customers. For this reason, the sizeable us payments surplus constituted the underlying balance, incorporating the bulk of long-term capital exports, public and private. With the prevailing compartmentalization of financial structures, variation in the underlying us balance essentially determined the supply-rhythm of international means of payment. International monetary constraint therefore denoted the influence which variations in the underlying US balance exerted over the amount of international liquidity, given the finance requirements of world trade.

Insofar as the underlying balance did not react upon macroeconomic regulation in the United States, there was no credit-adjustment process at the level of international financial structures which could ensure that the balance-of-payments situation remained compatible with the development of international liquidity. The world passed from dollar shortage to dollar glut without experiencing any compensatory force. Such a pattern of international relations could only hold steady on the basis of extreme differentiation between the hegemonic country and the rest of the world. The structure is of interest, however, because it embraces the whole period of the fifties and early sixties, and because it brought into view five characteristic features of a world economy lacking a highly developed international network of private financial intermediaries:

(a) The dollar was the sole international means of payment. In other countries, currency convertibility was restricted for residents. There may have been regional currency zones (the franc, the pound sterling) but they related to the dollar as national monetary spaces with limited convert-

ibility. International monetary relations were conducted between central banks. The whole monetary system was the most direct emanation of that type of hegemony. When general convertibility was introduced in 1958, the international monetary system rapidly shifted towards an international debt economy, whose mode of functioning moved ever further from its original dependence upon the underlying us balance.

- (b) So long as the accumulation of dollar liquidities by non-us residents was confined to foreign-trade cash transactions, international monetary relations expressed themselves in the dollar circuit. This circuit closed through the holding of dollars as the official reserves of foreign central banks. The intensity of external monetary constraint was precisely defined by the relationship between a country's dollar reserves, as a proportion of its external trade settled in foreign currency (whether directly in dollars or in other currencies bought with dollars), and the 'ideal' ratio laid down by its central bank.
- (c) Monetary regulation was therefore asymmetrical in two senses. First, the balance-of-payments constraint only weighed on the rest of the world, never on the United States itself. In the period of British hegemony, by contrast, the assymetry lay in the fact that the Bank of England's reaction to international monetary constraint drew a clearly defined response from foreign banks, while the converse was not true. Secondly, the balance-of-payments constraint did not operate in the same way for surplus and deficit nations. In the context of the nationally integrated banking system built after 1945, the surplus countries which accumulated reserves only felt an effect upon internal macroeconomic regulation if the money supply also grew at a faster rate. In general, an integrated banking system has many ways of neutralizing the effect of a gradual rise in the elements behind money creation. Thus, surplus countries could accumulate dollar reserves without even slightly altering their system of growth. Only deficit countries faced with a systematic drain of reserves had to modify their internal macroeconomic regulation, either by squeezing internal absorption or by devaluing their currency against the dollar. As a result, the United States exercised monetary constraint through variations in its own underlying balance. Such constraint was concentrated at the pole of deficit countries, manifesting itself not in the balance-sheets of private financial institutions but as a problem of economic policy. That period therefore witnessed a strongly political inflection of international monetary relations. The highly institutionalized relations of the fifties were, indeed, the most adequate to such a mode of regulation: exports of long-term public capital; central-bank control over foreign-exchange operations; regional monetary spaces designed to overcome the compartmentalization of finance systems (the sterling area, the franc zone, the European Payments Union); diverse political responses, varying with the relations among national social groups, to the centralized monetary constraint bome by deficit countries (budget policy, devaluation, more or less strict exchange controls).
- (d) As some economists already recognized in the fifties, such a monetary system was ill adapted to the internationalization of capital. The supply of international means of payment was liable to oscillate between glut and shortage as a function of compromises built into us

economic policy and the financial consequences of us political and military domination. More specifically, the underlying balance involved considerable yearly flows of long-term capital exports, much higher than the revenue from capital tied up abroad by American capitalists. Regulation of the underlying base therefore essentially required that the structural trade surplus should be sufficiently high to allow the return of dollars delivered to non-residents. This, in turn, depended above all on high foreign demand for us industrial goods and low penetration of the American market by the product of foreign industries. Such a condition could only be temporarily satisfied, for it presupposed a major differentiation between American and foreign industries within a process of internationalization that tended to spead American methods of production and mass consumption.

(e) By 1958, then, the link between a falling trade balance in manufactures and the accumulation of reserve dollars by foreign central banks had become a not insignificant problem. The roots of the crisis were to be found in the dollar's reserve function. For the dollar had to retain a high purchasing power if external accumulation by us companies was to continue at a very fast rate, and if the conversion of dollars into gold was not to threaten the success of the gold pool. Although some feelers were put out, there was no question of improving the competitiveness of us industry through a dollar-revaluation of all other currencies—that is, through a change in the definition of the international accounting unit. In this monetary organization coordinated by inter-state relations, there was a close link between the dollar's prestige and the stability of its purchasing power.

The Complementary 'Virtuous Circles' in Europe

We have seen that under the dollar-standard, monetary constraint did not apply symmetrically to surplus and deficit countries. Had it done so, it would it have very rapidly produced serious balance-of-payments distortions and called the Bretton Woods monetary order into question at an earlier date. But Western Europe, which (Britain excepted) was a privileged area for capital accumulation in the sixties, brought forth a number of distinctive complementary relations highly favourable to international stability. These relations may be expressed in the kind of macroeconomic schema we have elsewhere termed a 'virtuous circle'.\frac{1}{2} Actually, complementarity within the EEC arose from the interaction of two virtuous circles: the circle of disinflation and low growth typified by West Germany and the circle of high growth and rampant inflation most clearly represented by France. Table II summarizes the main features of these complementary schemas.

Table II brings out precisely the structural features of the international complementarity involved in these dynamic schemas. International cohesion presupposes that the hierarchy of industrialized countries will embrace systems of accumulation which dynamically combine the exemplary scheme. The uneven development of nations may be compatible with

See M. Aglietta, A. Orlean and G. Oudiz, 'Das adaptations différenciées aux contraintes internationales', Revue Economyus, Vol. 3z, No. 4 (July 1981)

Table II: Virtuous Circles' in Monopolistic Regulation

Virtuous Circle of Disinflation and Low Growth (West Germany)

Characteristics

International Specialization

Control of advanced technologies. High rate of cover of equipment goods. Income clastication in foreign trade tend to produce a surplus which grows at the same rate as internal and foreign demand. Competitive manufacturing poles create a high trade surplus in any confuncture.

Strang currency.

Impact of International Monetory

- * Exchange-rate is stuble or tends towards revaluation
- * Improving terms of trade or a rise in the real exchange-rate
- * Value rurplus on the trade balance, despite a slight eroston of value-share of markets

Internal Formation of Incomes

Disiplation is the crucial supect of the 'vartuous drede'; but it can only be consolidated if the growth of nominal wages reflects the full of import prices, and industry's internal terms of exchange do not detenorate. All this supposes a strict control of overall demand and an effective regulation of distributional conflicts in the sections least affected by international competition.

Essentially intensive accumulation. Productivity trends follow the rhythm of nationalitiesism. New industrial production capacity is geared to external markets.

Accussisheries and Productivity

Less hard of jub creation. Low population growth and great flexibility of the available active population. The Mass Danger and How to Apert if

Virtuons Circle of High Growth and Rampant Inflation

Poor control of advanced technologies. Low but rising rate of cover of equipment goods. Income elasticaties mean that internal growth tends to produce a foreign-trade deficit. Few competitive poles able to create a structural surplus. A trade balance highly sensitive to fluctuations in the internal conjuncture.

Pack corresp.

- Tendency to devaluation causing periodic downward adjustments.
 - * Improving compeditiveness or a fall in the real change-rate.

Senautivity to inflation is reinforced by internal factors bound up with rapid growth: tertiary sector development accompanying urbanization and the spread of wage-labour, sharp tensions over the relative shares of wages and profits. The facebulty allowed by rapid gravits is created to the increase of the increase of

Istumbre and existence accumulation stimulated by high internal growth Productivity trends turn on the dynamic interaction between expanding markets and specialization geared to world demand. A race develops between the transformation of industrial structures and importencement of the Internal market.

Acceleration of inflation. High productivity rises and scorptance of an implicit or explicit incomes policy.

general growth of the world economy, since each virtuous circle has its condition of existence and stability in the presence of the other. The countries which have gone furthest in establishing the principles of monopolistic regulation and climbing the ladder of dominant technologies will slacken their internal growth and exert a disinflationary pressure on high-growth countries. The latter will therefore face a counter-tendency to the internal inflationary strains which always threaten to become virulent. Conversely, the virtuous circle of disinflation requires that external growth should be sufficiently high to maintain industrial profitability and a current-account surplus on the balance of payments. The first of these conditions will determine whether the volume of investment is enough to generate industrial innovation, to consolidate the quality of specialization, and to yield the productivity gains necessary for a rise in real incomes. The second condition affects the level of confidence in the strong-currency nations that have to underpin the international monetary system; it also determines whether the outward flow of capital (and hence advanced technology) to high-growth countries will have a destabilizing influence on the balance of payments of low-growth countries. Thus, rising internal demand in high-growth countries ensures that commodity exports from strong-currency nations will increase with sufficient regularity for them to reap the full benefit of their highly priced labour. It follows that high-growth countries, the delayed beneficiaries of mass production and consumption, have to accept a growing penetration of their internal market. Such penetration makes the country heavily dependent upon the technology of strong-currency nations, and therefore slows down the closing of differentials within the world system. It will contribute to international cohesion provided that it is tolerable to the countries undergoing penetration. These must consequently be able to make a downward adjustment in their exchange rate.

Clearly there is a strong interaction between these two types of virtuous circles. They are, indeed, the normative schemas of an international economic order whose stability derives from the complementary differentiation of its participant countries. The differences between them must be compatible with rapid gains in productivity, and this can only be achieved through a diversification of trade among industrial countries which expands their markets and allows a reduction in absolute costs. Here lie the roots of a twofold characteristic of international relations in the postwar epoch of maturing Western growth: namely, a rise in commodity exchange among industrialized countries that was faster than world growth or trade expansion with other components of the world economy, and ad hoc adjustments to real exchange-rates designed to make international competition tolerable for weak-currency nations.

If we leave aside the dislocation of certain exchange-rates from a solid dollar-base, international currency adjustments were facilitated by the desynchronization of national conjunctures inherent in the Bretton Woods form of monetary constraint mediated by balances of payments. International monetary cohesion stemmed from the asymmetric character of such a constraint. So long as the country whose money served internationally as both reserve-currency and means of payment also displayed an underlying structural surplus-balance and a low level of inflation, any balance-of-payments deficit was thrown onto high-growth countries and softened by

the flow of capital from the United States. Since this flow tended to modulate according to the rhythm of internal GFCF, the US conjuncture had a delayed impact which reinforced growth-constraints on the most dynamic countries. In fact, a conjunctural downturn in the United States tended both to open or widen the trade deficit of high-growth countries and to slow international dollar-financing by US companies and financial institutions. A number of countries therefore suffered a worsening of their external monetary position which forced them to take internal stabilization measures designed to strengthen their competitiveness. The first result of such measures was a temporary economic downturn sufficient to reverse their currency slide.

In the early sixties, when the supply of cheap, unskilled labour from the GDR had dried up, income formation in West Germany began to be governed by slower growth-rates and a priority struggle against inflation. It was this new trend which allowed a complementary relationship to develop between the virtuous circles in Europe. However, the dynamic stability of Western Europe also depended on massive immigration from the south and on the finely tuned international functions of the dollar. As we have seen, this latter condition was too closely bound up with the underlying balance of the United States. From the mid-sixties, Washington's derisory attempts to control this underlying base were drowned by crucial choices in economic policy. It had become an urgent necessity both to combat the huge social inequalities within the country and to strengthen us imperialism against the attacks from outside.

II. The Forces that Destroyed the Postwar Order

On the basis of the preceding exposition, it is possible to explain the disintegrating tendencies which have weakened the old cohesion and transformed it into a pattern displaying some of the previous structural characteristics but also a number of new processes. We may term this the cobesion of crisis, belonging as it does to an era of crisis for the growth-system of the industrialized countries as a whole. It is still a form of cohesion, however, because the dollar has maintained its preponderance despite the recurring crises of confidence, and because the surplus-and-deficit polarization has not caused the world economy to splinter into largely self-sufficient and strongly protected regions. The complementarity of virtuous circles has given way to a coexistence of vicious circles which are the prototypal schemas of the crisis: the vicious circle of high exchange-rate and stagflation, and the victous circle of low exchange-rate and runaway inflation. The cohesion of crisis, as it has appeared between 1973 and 1980, is looser than the former cohesion owing to the fact that the balance-of-payments constraint of deficit countries has become highly ambivalent. The asymmetry of constraint is also much less clear, for a current-payments surplus sets up reactions which may powerfully disturb the internal macroeconomic regulation of the affected country. The distribution of countries in the prototypal schemas of the crisis implies a certain continuity in the pattern of the world economy. However, the international monetary processes are very different from those of the earlier period. While still focusing on the structures that shape the processes of international settlements, we should now briefly analyse the

main transformations that have taken place in the world economy since the mid-1960s, and how they have eroded the old regime of growth.

Inflationary Expansion in the United States

The autonomous tendencies of us inflation have destroyed the centre of gravity of an international monetary system based upon the dollar circuit—or, in other words, upon regulation of the international means of payment by the underlying us balance. In order to exercise a stabilizing constraint on the inflationary tensions secreted by the protracted wave of accumulation in the industrialized countries, the United States would have had to remain firmly within the virtuous circles of disinflation. There were three conditions for a stable dollar circuit: the underlying balance had to be sensitive to the international conjuncture so as to limit the supply of international means of payment if a risk of synchronized expansion ever appeared in the Western economies; inflation had to run below the level of competitor nations so that the dollar might remain the best reserve form; and there had to be a finance market sufficiently attractive for long-term investment to hold international liquidities above the level required for financing international trade.

Now none of these conditions was compatible with deep-rooted inflation in the us productive system. The sharp rise in the active population combined with the growing civil rights movement and the Vietnam War precluded any lasting curbs in growth in spite of the bottlenecks that appeared in equipment-goods industries. Instead of being resolved through a favourable trend in relative prices, these bottlenecks grew more acute as a result of the tertiarization of the us economy that went hand-in-hand with the internationalization of capital. The worsening relative prices of manufacturing industry stimulated demand for its products while undermining its competitive position. The trade balance on manufactured items moved from a high surplus to a mounting deficit. Moreover, the general inflationary climate encouraged financial speculation (real estate booms, a wave of corporate mergers), pushing up short-term interest rates and depressing long-term financing of productive investment. The growth of unskilled, low-wage tertiary employment further slowed the rise in private-sector labour productivity and heightened the inequality of direct income distribution that was offset by mushrooming welfare programmes. The ever greater disjuncture between internal demand and productivity therefore unleashed a formidable credit surge, internationalized by the deterioration of the underlying balance.

By the mid-sixties, the internationalization of companies and banks was sufficiently advanced for major new capital-export channels to complement those financing the deficit on the underlying balance. Clumsy attempts to control the outward flow prompted counter-action by private financial intermediaries, so that the ensuing rise of the Eurodollar radically altered the postwar international monetary system based upon centralbank preponderance and a symmetrical balance-of-payments constraints. As the Bretton Woods monetary order entered its deathagony, an international credit economy was growing up around a private money market.

The Convergence of Industrial Structures

Every specialized study of the 1963-1973 period points to a loss of the technological differentials that assured us supremacy after the Second World War. To the extent that high-growth countries developed their industrial structures and approached the strong-currency nations in terms of specialization quality and productivity levels, international rivalry became a sharper and more serious phenomenon. The structural complementarity underpinning the status of strong-currency nations gradually broke apart through the closing of the original gap. The deepening international division of labour, horizontal and no longer vertical as in the nineteenth century, made this an endogenous process. Thus, in the last third of the nineteenth century, the United States and Germany had used protectionist measures to break the advance of British industry and build their own processing industries. Since the late 1950s. the internationalization of production has itself led to a tight imbrication of industrial structures. The spread of technology and methods of organizing production has allowed a few countries to rival the United States at the source of its supremacy: namely, the rhythm of technological innovation and the renewal of production norms.

This deepening international division of labour has had two major consequences. First, it has conflicted with the fixed exchange-rates that expressed the unity of the dollar's international functions. The dollar, with its two other monetary functions, must be given preference as a reserve in a system of convertible currencies so long as private and state holders of the dollar are convinced that its parities with other convertible currencies will not change to its disadvantage. This is the definite feature of an asymmetric monetary constraint which has to be offset for surplus countries and brought to bear only on deficit countries. However, once productivity rose in the United States at a markedly slower rate than in competitor countries, with no possibility of offsetting the trend by an adequate reduction of wage costs, such a mode of functioning of the international monetary system could not but continually worsen the competitive position of American industry. This was all the clearer in that costs were swollen by a rapid increase in the value of services bought from the tertiary sector.

Secondly, the internationalization of production, dominated by a process of *intra-branch* specialization, led to a general rise in the penetration of Western European internal markets after 1968, involving a systematic quest for economies of scale in response to escalating wage costs. The combined spurt in accumulation brought about major surplus capacity in a number of important engineering branches affected by the flagging demand for consumer durables and the introduction of electronics into production. The result, then, was a synchronization of conjunctures and a drawing together of the sector characteristics of manufacturing industries. The complementarity of the virtuous circles underwent a profound change.

Japan's Distinctive Growth Model

We have seen that one crucial aspect of the complementarity of virtuous

circles is the contradiction between improved competitiveness and improved terms of trade which, stemming from horizontal specialization within manufacturing industry, found expression in the growing dependence of high-growth countries upon imported industrial goods. This process helped to create an external market for countries whose slower-rising internal demand underlay disinflation in the world economy. Japan, however, the country with the highest growth-trend, was altogether free of this dilemma. As soon as the production capacity was created to satisfy internal demand, it systematically rejected any dependence on imports and thereby escaped the horizontal specialization which governs the division of labour among industrialized countries. Retaining a vertical specialization as it became a big industrial power in the sixties, Japan has mainly imported raw materials or semi-finished goods and exported manufactures from its electrical goods industry. Hence, Japan's terms of trade chiefly depend on the relationship between the prices of raw materials and manufactured products. In periods when this favours the latter over the former, Japan escapes the contradication mentioned above. It may then obtain improved terms of trade, while simultaneously raising the competitiveness and profitability of its export industry. Japan has therefore broken the complementary relationship crucial to the reproduction of the normative schemas. In the early fifties, when it had negligible weight in the world economy, Japan could follow its course without disturbing the principle of international cohesion established after the end of the Korean War. It was only after the 1961-65 cyclical downturn in accumulation that Japan's imbalancing influence began to make itself seriously felt. This was the time when its motor vehicles and electrical household goods first began to invade the us market. Since Japan was able to become a world economic power without opening its internal market, its very dynamism became a factor destabilizing international trade flows.

Growth was much jerkier than in the western countries, being marked by the phenomenon of periodic overaccumulation. After 1950, Japan's soaring industry benefited from a rural hinterland which served to regulate the active wage-earning population according to the irregular impulses of industrial employment. This reliable reserve army of labour provided the key to success for the famous dual management of labour based on the segmentation of employment between 'secure' and 'insecure' sectors. The combined accumulation of material fixed capital and trained, secure manpower, bolstered by a remarkable mobility that made disinvestment an economic proposition, was reflected in highspeed productivity rises in manufacturing industry. Japanese industry is driven by an uneasy dynamic equilibrium between very high fixed costs and rapidly growing rates of return. Any deviation of internal demand from the level required for a maximum return on production capacity will set up an irresistible growth of exports. Since the external surplus balance on manufactured goods can rise without hindrance from foreign penetration of the internal market, its only real obstacle is the capacity for internal absorption. Thus any barrier to the rising living standards of wage-earners (higher-priced imports of raw materials, increased housing rents, greater town development costs, attempts to protect agricultural income by raising the price of rice, and so on) tends to precipitate a new Japanese offensive on external markets. The sharpening of international rivalry then aggravates the trade imbalance, which political pressures from the United States and the EEC have thus far proven incapable of rectifying.

The Genesis of an International Debt Economy

The new Eurobank network is one example of the self-organization of market relations at a time when official institutions have failed to promote international monetary functions compatible with the new trends in the internationalization of capital. A supply of international means of payment wholly tied to the underlying us balance was increasingly out of tune with the international liquidity requirements of ever broader commercial and financial operations in which the quantitative role of the us economy was rapidly declining. The grounding of international money creation on the underlying us balance was, in fact, juxtaposed with a system of bank credit weighed in favour of non-residents. This could not but widen the deficit balance on official us settlements, while heightening the monetary strains on countries whose central bank was condemned to passive absorption of surplus reserves as a way of completing the dollar circuit.

The development of a private international money market, operating in dollars yet ever more autonomous of the us economy, has profoundly altered the expression of international monetary constraints and channelled the irreversible destruction of the Bretton Woods monetary order. The new international debt economy is different in many ways from all previous monetary systems (the late-nineteenth century portfolio economy centred on the London market; the thirties experience of monetary cloistering, tempered by institutional co-operation between the three great financial poles of the time; the dollar circuit functionally tied to the us balance of payments). It is necessary to register the originality of these structural characteristics in order to understand the monetary system established after 1971.

In so far as the demand for Eurobank dollar loans is the result of a banking intervention, it is not limited by any pre-existing quantum of resources. The Eurobanks, like any integrated banking system, obey the principle that credits make deposits. The openness of the Eurobanks to the us banking system, the lack of central regulation, the great efficiency of inter-bank operations in moving available liquidities—all these are grounds for thinking that the main features of the debt economy are being transmitted through the system. Certainly the supply of Eurodollars is flexible, and it matters little whether money is created ex nubilo or whether the circulation of deposited liquidities is of flexible velocity. We know that money creation through substitution has the same effects as direct money creation. The essential point is that, contrary to the system of inter-linked credits and liabilities which existed between British and foreign banks before the First World War, the Eurobanks have given rise to a type of integration not closely dependent upon one country's monetary policy.

This private structure of international money creation allows the general monetization of debts and the freeing of debtors from direct creditor pressure. It is a

characteristic peculiar to every system of integrated intermediation. In international relations there may be spectacular effects on the balance of payments when such a system is not subject to a form of monetary sovereignty that has the means and the interest to exercise central discipline. Insofar as the demand for dollar credits emanating from industrial countries is always satisfied on more or less favourable terms, deficits by themselves no longer exert systematic pressure for their own reabsorption. They prompt states and large private economic units to follow a strategy of safeguarding credit lines and stalking liquidities. Caught in the debt-economy trap and compelled to fight against devaluation of their claims, creditors are at the origin of an asset-switching strategy between forms of holding liquid reserves in the various convertible currencies. The result is a major transformation of international monetary constraints. For countries with convertible currencies, the problem of financing the balance of payments is passing into a foreign-exchange problem. Debtors feel the effects of international monetary constraint only through the impact on overall exchange-rates of the net currency flows. These flows are themselves triggered by discordance between the monetary forms of the international means of payment and the forms desired by the holders of international liquidities.

The international monetary functions of the dollar have broken into pieces. As money of account, the dollar is no longer the pivot for the expression of currency values. From a technical point of view, the foreign exchange markets generally leave a question-mark over the dollar-value of currencies, while three-cornered currency arbitrage passes by the dollar and many bilateral exchange-rates are of a purely unmediated character. Nevertheless, it is no simple matter to interpret the spread of tensions through the exchange markets. In the Bretton Woods system, the unpegging of a particular currency was a clear constraint sanction which involved its relationship to all other currencies tied to the dollar. The effect on prices and competitiveness could be anticipated with a reasonable degree of certainty. In the general currency-float, however, there is no common reference-point against which the movement of the two currencies can be compared and expressed in value-terms. The rate of exchange between two currencies may vary simply through a change in the dollar's relationship to all other currencies, quite independently of the real competitive position of the two countries concerned. Such developments are possible because the dollar's reserve function is no longer stable. The private and official demand for dollars qua liquid assets on call from non-residents is marginally subject to abruptly changing expectations about the future value of such liquidities in relation to other forms of holding. There is always some uncertainty about the exchange-rate effect of abrupt changes in the demand function of liquid dollar assets held by non-residents, especially a reversal in this function can never be anticipated with operational precision.

Consequently, the loosening of links between international dollar credit and the vicisatudes of us macroeconomic regulation makes a considerable change to the monetary dynamic. The international monetary system feels the impact of monetary strains within the us economy through the mediation of fluctuating interest-rates and exchange-rates. The irregularity of these variables reflects the hybrid nature of present-day interna-

tional monetary relations. We have the emergence of a fully-fledged international credit system, deterritorialized and beyond regulation by any national sovereign state. Yet the three essential functions of money are neither unified under a supranational monetary body nor managed through inter-state cooperation based upon universally accepted principles. Indeed, the instability of the reserve function leads to rivalry among convertible currencies which destabilizes the complementary relations joining national regimes of growth.

The Rise of Oil Rents

This development has given the final blow to the old type of international economic cohesion. In fact, it is one more episode in the centuries-old opposition between rent and the accumulation of capital. In the history of societies, when rents have risen faster than the productivity of the conditions for existence and hence, faster than the surplus at the long-term disposal of the ruling classes—the result has more than once been a decline of the civilization in question. Under capitalism, which is not based upon tributary relations, things do not happen in this way. Nevertheless, rents do constitute un productive deductions from surplusvalue which sharpen the conflict between capitalists and wage-earners and reduce the surplus available for accumulation. The fact that oil rents are appropriated through the mediation of state apparatuses does not significantly alter this social relationship. It is still a pure relationship of distribution resulting from exclusive control over conditions of capitalist production which are not themselves reproduced by capitalist processes of production.

The inordinate increase in the oil tribute has a number of contradictory results, just like the agricultural rents that were the subject of the good old heated debates between Ricardo and Malthus. These results fall into three categories:

- (a) A considerable rise in the production costs of industry hits at one of the growth conditions common to industrialized countries and puts a damper on the industrialization of other countries. At the same time, however, the change in relative prices prompts the introduction of technologies which lead to the manufacture of new equipment goods. Energy-saving may become a principle capable of orienting industrial policy, since it conjures up new schemas of technical and economic interconnection both within and among national production systems. The rise in rents may therefore have indirectly beneficial effects, owing to changes in the division of labour caused by capitalist rent-reduction strategies.
- (b) Since feudal or bourgeois-state rentiers have neither the same propensity to consume nor the same spending pattern as the social demand involved in mass consumption, there is an inevitable flagging of world demand and a change in its structural composition. On two occasions—in 1973—74 and 1978—79—all the Western countries have simultaneously undergone the sudden effects of such a change. This powerful force for the synchronization of conjunctures puts an end to the autonomy of national macroeconomic regulation which, under the dollar

standard, was crucial in shifting the balance-of-payments constraint on to deficit countries.

(c) The polarization of surpluses and deficits has given the international debt economy a truly world-wide dimension. The third world has largely opened itself to the networks of banking intermediation as is shown by the very rapid decline in public aid and direct investment, compared to bank loans, in the financing in all but the poorest countries. This change in international financial structures is the other side of the passive economic role always played by rentiers. The third world recipients of the oil rent are particularly marginal in steering the accumulation of capital, so much so that they have been incapable of creating finance institutions to exercise capitalist control over segments of world production. All they have is the negative potential to destabilize foreign-exchange markets through the marginal shifts in liquidities bound up with currency speculation.

III. The Cohesion of Crisis: 1973-1979

It may seem surprising to join together the words 'cohesion' and 'crisis'. But we have intentionally done this in order to highlight the ambivalence of present-day international relations. The changes identified above have exploded the hierarchical postwar order and its asymmetric balance-ofpayments constraints. By contrast with the crisis of the 1930s, however, international trade has not shrunk but continued to expand: international financial assets have not been repatriated by creditors and short-term credit has not run dry; both have undergone a huge expansion more or less reflected in the size of the Euromarkets. The reality of crisis appears in the fact that major exchange-rate fluctuations cause approximately equivalent changes in the competitive position of industrialized countries (nominal variations largely being real variations); while the response of the real trade flows is very inert. Moreover, the non-oil-producing countries of the third world are ever more sharply diverging from one another: some experience an absolute decline in average living standards and the shrinking purchasing-power of their exports greatly reduces their capacity to borrow on international financial markets; others have maintained high growth through an escalating level of debt, which increases the ratio between the financial burden and export revenue net of the cost of oil imports.

There is a crisis, then, because the modes of expression of international monetary constraints (exchange-rate variations, short-term capital transfers) do not result in adjustments capable of absorbing the structural distortions. The processes in operation, involving either adjustment through a marked drop in the growth-rate or a rise in the debt level without any adjustment, serve as added fuel for the factors of crisis. Still, we may speak of cohesion in the sense that monetization of deficits is taken for granted on the international money market. This explains the de facto solidarity between creditors and debtors: no major debtor nation has yet slashed internal demand in such a way as to trigger a chain contraction of international trade; while creditor nations are cautious in exercising their power to transfer liquidities, and the central banks of countries with convertible currencies still alleviate the instability of foreign-exchange markets in

periods of acute crisis. Two aspects of present-day international relations seem crucial to the future development of the crisis: the transformation of the virtuous circles into vicious circles in Western Europe, and the monetary instability in the international debt economy.

From Virtuous to Vicious Circles

Table III sets out the two prototypal schemas resulting from the degeneration of the virtuous circles in Europe. It allows us to identify the main relationships between the deterioration of industrial structures and the principal forms of macroeconomic articulation. As always with highly formalized schemas, they are theoretical models for analysis. We may think of concrete national situations as combinations of the basic tendencies associated with the four polar schemas; what remains of the virtuous circles (Germany-France), and what flows from the victous circle dynamic (Belgium-Italy) into which they have tended to degenerate. Each national pattern depends upon the robustness of the specialization acquired through past economic policy and upon the solidity of the compromises forged between social groups. Nevertheless, the vicious circles embrace countries very distant from the polar cases, just as the virtuous circles did in the previous period. Roughly speaking, Belgium typifies the vicious circles of overvalued currency and stagflation, while Italy most clearly expresses the vicious circle of declining exchange-rate and high inflation.

Table III describes the main articulations of the vicious circle dynamic. The degeneration of the two polar forms of the virtuous circle dynamic has been the major phenomenon in the weakening of Europe's position in the 1970s. All the changes in the world economy identified above have played a part in this process. The us hammer-blows, designed to halt the country's declining competitiveness through a real and substantial devaluation of the dollar, have greatly hindered the sale of European commodities throughout the huge dollar-zone market. The slackening of Japanese domestic growth, which caused a turn to external markets, strengthened growth of third markets and then increased penetration of Europe itself. The oil price rise slowed growth-rates particularly in Western Europe where there is a high level of trade integration. Finally, as soon as changes in monetary constraints expressed themselves in fluctuating exchange-rates, divergent trends began to appear among the European currencies in times of dollar instability.

The dynamic of the vicious circles allows us to grasp the developments that have been noted throughout Western Europe. These schemas do, in fact, involve a number of common elements tending to reduce growth-rates in general—for example, weaker industrial specialization in the traditional engineering branches, a higher level of import dependence, a system of index-linked incomes, the role of tertiary sectors in cushioning redundancies, and the rise in public expenditure. But they also involve a number of divergent elements maintaining a wide span of inflation rates: the use or non-use of exchange-controls to steer monetary policy; the greater or lesser flexibility of employment structures (responsiveness of the active population to contracting employment, the

Table III: The Concomitant Vicious Circles in the International Crisis

Vicious Circle of Overvalued Currency and Stagilation (Belgrum)

Characteristic Features

International Specialization

Formedy very specialized industrial structure, strong Progressively weaker specialization owing to rigidity in the capital-intensive metallurgical branches. branches affected by changing social demand position

Overnehad currency

Efects of International Mountary

* Real exchange-rate tends to rase.

* Improved terms of industrial trade and cheaper imported industrial dechaing yo ğ -8 maternals competitiveness.

since dendustrialization continually reduces the available * The trade balance in value terms tends to show a septent, production capacity

between production costs and export praces Three The permanently overvalued currency leads to a divergence contequences:

Formation of Industrial Princis

* Export margins are squeezed to vanishing point.

* Producers try to absorb their fixed costs by adjusting prices within production

competition and the resulting import-penetration of the * The nae in internal prices is limited, however, by foreign internal market.

The result is a combination of:

* inadequate profit-levels leading to the aliannation of prediction expectly,
" inflationary pressure

ŧ, from producers limiting disinflation of imported costs,

 growing dependence on foreign countries both in exports and the internal market Productivity tises are essentially due to attorneatiment without restructuring in the new technologies capable of giving new flexibility to the production processes.

Victors Circle of Palling Exchange-rate and Rising Inflation (Italy)

rub-contracting and inaccure employment (the underground ndustrial structure with an important role for highly once-compentive consumer branches. Shaky specialization, but fuxuly organization of production due economy) Carrency is depressed against the major convertible currencies in the hope that it will be underwilved

* Real exchange-rate tends to fall

* Temperary gains in competitiveness do not last long enough for productivity nace to offset inflationary pressures fuelled by lower exchange-rate

except when gains in competitiveness affect the volume of * The trade balance in value terms tends to show a defint, external trade.

exchange rate The reaction of the production system depends on the rigidity of praces and costs, itself determined production system is widened by the specialization of The crucial determinant is the malexation of all outs to the touring import prices arising from the steep drop in the by the frequency of indexation reviews. The cleavinge in the industry:

workforce have a limited accumulation capacity, owing to the ever-greater cost ngidity in terms of the length of their * Enterprises with a beavy infrastructure and secure production cycles -a radiction in boars and a last of jobs

* Small firms involved in short production cycles and capable of diversifying into home-based labour benefit from he maing national-currency price of exports - grawth sy informel employment Productivity nace are made possible by fragmentation of the abour market. They are concentrated in 'labour intensive' adustries thanks to the decentralization of production processes allowed by microelectronics

Relationately between Industry and the Rast of Fountain

The cost of job losses in industry is socialized through centrally arranged institutional mechanisms:

- * Higher public spending on unemployment and job
- * Stractly uniform wage trends in all sections.
- * Impact of wage costs on the overall prices of low-productivity tertiary sectors

Results a growing public deficit and a systematic determention of the industrial period relationship.

The dramage of public finances serves as an outlet for the contraductions of macroeconomic regulation. The public deficit, combined with company deficits resulting from the overerabled currency, are not entirely behanced by household savings, despite the stagnation of production and the investment cuthack —the current-second affect because a stratumal phonomena.

Interaction between Internal and International Mountary Constraints The maintenance at all costs of a high exchange-rate—the, guiding principle of monetary policy—is the last obstrace to an inflationary explosion. Monetary policy is therefore general to the financing of internal deficius from shroad - natural raturus, while inflation is high moderate from subcond to attract short-term capital. The mounting financial burden has the dual effect of excluding long-term investment projects and cutting commodity-imports so that interest can be paid to foreign exclitors.

Indexation is extended to the whole of public transport. It sets off an inflationary explosion of public expenditure beyond all central control. Since there is no effective tax system, the public digiti tend to rus as a proportion of GDP. The close relation between the falling exchange-rate and the indexation of internal prices allows the industrial/litriary providestrations to the material prices allows the industrial/litriary providential processing the industrial/litriary providential prices allows the industrial/litriary providers and wage indexation.

The central bank does not control the exchange-rate. Private-ector expectations about the exchange-rate guide indexation reviews and public-ector finance requirements for social expenditure, wages and operational losses on heavy industry. Bayestands of shiling exchange-rate depend, in rurn, upon the womening current-account deficit and/or public deficit, the latter pointing towards a cath-injection without an equivalent rate in production.

Foreign-exchange pseudation therefore measures intensity of conflict over measure distributions, which is resolved through the monocimation of defects. Self-fulfilling speculation unleashes inflationary waves which express the declining autonomy of monerary policy. The central bank can only reasoert its authority in a crude and temporary manner, through a crudit space; that raises interest rates to a duxying level.

relative size of secure and insecure components of the workforce); the size of the public deficit and the mode of financing it.

The processes outlined in Table III reveal the scope of structural changes in Western Europe. The complementary virtuous circles used to reinforce each other, and their very differences constituted the macro-economic cohesion of the European zone. By contrast, the vicious circles continually threaten to change into each other by virtue of the monetary constraints they contain. The articulation of a declining exchange-rate and cumulative inflation is only broken by monetary checks that plunge the country into stagflation. The use of an overvalued currency to contain inflation causes such distortions in the price relationship between manufacturing industry and the rest of the economy that the central bank comes under strong pressure to give industry a burst of oxygen, even at the risk of accelerating inflation.

Furthermore, interaction between the two types of vicious circles tends to aggravate the harmful features of each. Thus, when exchange-rates move apart as a result of the dollar's instability, their short-term divergence is much greater than the differences in inflation rates or a fortiori in industrial price trends. Exports from strong to weak-currency countries may therefore be only mildly inflationary in the exporter's currency, but highly so in the importer's currency. In the country which receives them, such exports fuel internal inflation owing to the indexation of internal incomes to the price of imported commodities. At the same time, the devaluation of a weak currency makes that country's exports highly competitive on the markets of strong-currency countries, thereby encouraging them to extend industrial disinvestment in the name of rationalization. A currency float in an integrated economic space like Western Europe is a form of monetary constraint particularly liable to impede growth. For in strong-currency countries profit-levels will decline, industry will have no prospects of expansion, and other activities, by increasing the costs of industry, will not be able to provide full compensation. In weak-currency countries, on the other hand, rising inflation will play financial havoc, especially in public finances and concentrated industrial sectors.

Despite the apparent uniformity of macroeconomic constraints, however, structural changes do not operate in the same way in the two countries that typify the vicious circles. Belgium is an extreme case of rigid social structures whose full weight is brought to bear on industry by the constraint of international competition. The destruction of industrial production capacity, which is the only possible response, poses a serious threat for the future. In Italy, on the other hand, excessive currency devaluation temporarily lifts the constraints in a way which can only benefit the most flexible sectors of the economy. A progressive transformation of structures is renewing the bases of the country's competitive position.

Monetary Instability in the International Debt Economy

Many nationally oriented studies of the debt economy have investigated the close relationship between a floating exchange-rate and interest-rates tied to the expansion of bank credit, itself a response to the indexation of prices and incomes to the exchange rate. They have shown that this articulation removes any solid foundation in nominal values. Since the unit of account is no longer a commonly accepted value-base, any variation in relative prices is regarded with suspicion. For no one can say whether such a variation stems from changes in productivity and the structure of demand, or whether it is the result of favourable indexation formulas which, having been obtained by certain economic units, are considered grounds for outbidding by those adversely affected.

The international debt economy is a generalization of the debt-economy dynamic rooted in the convergence of two trends: the internationalization of American banks and the rise of foreign-currency departments in the credit operations of European and Japanese banks. The international monetary system still revolves around the dollar in two senses. First, the dollar circuit survives because foreign central banks keep the dollar as their main reserve, and because the dampening of exchange-rate fluctuations leads the central banks of countries that benefit from the substitution of dollars in their own currency systems to increase their short-term claims on the us Treasury. Secondly, the Eurodollar and dollar are so interchangeable that the Eurodollar market is directly affected by variations on the us money market.

Nevertheless, the present international monetary system is very different from the system which, corresponding to hegemony of the us economy, expressed international monetary constraints as asymmetric monetary constraints involving adjustments to the balance of payments. First of all, the sources of Eurodollar creation are very largely detached from the underlying us balance, responding instead to the general stimuli of the credit supply in a debt economy. Next, the fact that several currencies are privately held as reserve assets leads to a potential currency rivalry which makes the demand functions of money markedly less stable. The proliferation of forms of liquidity holding extends the currency demand to non-residents and subjects it to financial determinants (relative interest-rate variations, expectations of exchange-fluctuations) which increasingly loosen the macroeconomic bond between money held in a particular currency and the global income of the country in question. We may say that international monetary instability, rendered potent by the high mobility of liquid capitals, now stems from the ease with which private agents can use the international credit system to convert a capital holding from one currency form to another.

For example, if an American corporation expects an appreciation of the deutschmark, it will delay the collection of a bill drawn up in that currency. It thereby creates a need for funds—or, in other words, a short-term mark credit that it will have to finance. For if it already had enough funds for this purpose, it would have monetary assets over and above current transaction needs. It would be 'overliquid'. The allotment of such liquidities to speculation on the mark must be weighed against the return on other possible short-term investments. Otherwise, the firm has

² See, in particular, V. Levy-Garboua, G. Oudiz, H. Sterdynak and P. Villa, 'Change, inflation et intérêt: un modèle', Rassa Economysis, Vol. 29, No. 3 (September 1978)

to draw on its dollar bank-credit lines, the cost of which depends upon the urgency of liquidity requirements on the us money market. The crucial point is that expectations of a falling dollar, expressed in a financial operation with no counterpart in production, result in dollar debts to which the international banking system will respond.

However we look at it, we reach the conclusion that a polarized and self-sustained flow of capital triggering self-fulfilling speculation requires the presence of two inter-related conditions: first, liberated money capital, involving liquidities in excess of funding requirements; and, secondly, a banking system which massively and flexibly finances anticipated transfers. These conditions are inter-related because surplus liquidities can only be accumulated out of past money creation. At any event, the issue is whether the money creation system is able to distinguish between the creation of a money counterpart for new incomes, the creation of money for deficit monetization, and the creation of a money-counterpart for capital transfers. The three forms do not at all have the same effect upon money supply and inflation. The last two set up cumulative instability, since they create money tokens that do not represent purchasing-power for new production. If the central banks themselves stand as counterparts on the foreign-exchange markets, responding to the conversion demand of commercial banks, the monetary base will be affected in such a way that the means of credit expansion in the relevant country are grafted onto international movements of capital.

Since private agents have almost unlimited access to Eurobank dollar credit when a variation in exchange rates is expected, the means available for speculation are disproportionate to the money-base fluctuations that can be absorbed by national monetary systems. This is why internal credit conditions in these countries are very sensitive to international movements of capital. Here we find confirmation of our earlier proposition that the world economy has no pivot for a unit of account to serve as a common reference legitimating value transfers. Money transfers, then, cannot be quantitatively regulated unless there is a thoroughgoing reform of monetary organization. In fact, if we leave aside the United States, the external component of the monetary base of countries whose currency is internationalized may vary enormously when the central banks intervene to check an excessive instability of exchange rates. It is then neither possible nor desirable fully to neutralize fluctuations in the external component of the monetary base so as to achieve an abstract money-supply target. The change required in obligatory reserves would trigger too sudden an expansion or contraction of the internal component of bank credit; and this would discriminate against resident borrowers, who may be hard hit in their production plans.

In the 1973-79 period, recurrent exchange crises developed around the dollar-mark exchange rate that played a guiding role for international financial speculation. This process stemmed from the structure of international assets, whose consequences for monetary instability have been well described.³ While we have no reason to rehearse these

³ Cf M Aglietta, 'Des limites financières à la croissance', Economie Praspective Internationale

conclusions in an article devoted to the theoretical bases for study of the world economic system, we may, however, mention the specific features of this pattern which justify our use of the term 'cohesion of crisis'. In reality, the United States and West Germany were in diametrically opposite, or structurally differentiated, positions during this period. This gave rise to a certain community of expectations among private agents determined to modify the structure of their capital:

UNITED STATES
Current account deficit
High inflationary trend

Expansionist monetary policy

WEST GERMANY Current account surplus Low inflationary trend Restrictive monetary policy until 1978

West Germany's surplus position made the deutschmark a cufrency with exclusively reserve functions. The international mark circuit was therefore grafted onto the dollar circuit, so that the marks acquired by non-residents of Germany were converted from pre-existing dollar balances. Since the value of the mark tended to appreciate in relation to the dollar, the long-term hierarchy of interest rates was able to remain stable. (The fact that German rates were systematically lower than American rates expressed the expectation of dollar depreciation.) The driving force behind this process was a combination of, on the one hand, international dollar credit to finance the current-account deficits caused by rising oil imports, and on the other hand, the desire of creditors to diversify their assets away from the dollar.

Throughout this period, the devastating effects of currency rivalry were held in check by the differences in the positions of the dollar and mark, the former remaining the international means of payment, the latter acquiring the status of an international means of reserve. In so far as the West German central bank was able to influence the expectations of international financial operators, it could partly regulate the rhythm of diversification. For it, monetary constraint took the form of a contradiction between a rate of growth of internal money supply liable to refuel inflation, and a rate of deutschmark appreciation that tended to transform the virtuous circle of macroeconomic regulation into the vicious circle of stagflation.

The 1978-79 watershed demonstrated that this was an untenable contradiction. The movements of capital induced by us inflation-rates caused an excessively high degree of instability. The growth of West German money supply in 1978 revived inflation at a time when the long period of mark appreciation had already tipped the economy into the vicious circle. The second oil-price shock, coming on top of this worsening situation, lost West Germany its status as a surplus pole standing over and against the American deficit. The end had come for a form of international monetary constraint that revolved around the steady evolution of the dollar-mark exchange rate and the maintenance of relatively stable differentials between interest rates in the United States and the strong currency countries.

No 3 (July 1980); D. Cohen and P. Ewenczyk, 'L'instabilité du système monetaire international', *Economie et Statistique* No 126 (October 1980); and Ricardo Parboni, *The Dollar and its Rivals*, NLB/Verso, London 1981.

Reaganomics and the Age of Uncertainty

With the disappearance of the quasi-stability of the dollar-mark relationship, the crisis of macroeconomic policy in the United States has wrecked increasing havoc in the regulation of the world economy. Unprecedented real interest rates of 10% or higher are indicative of the profound uncertainty which suffuses all economic calculation and corporate planning in the early 1980s.

In the 1970s the United States had followed a predictable course: monetary policy was designed to stabilize interest rates as much as possible and to shore up the inflationary growth of global demand through a huge expansion of credit. The result was an accumulation of dollar balances abroad which did not greatly worry the us government until the 1978 exchange-rate crisis. This crisis, erupting independently of any 'exogeneous shock', showed beyond any doubt that the reserve function of the dollar was under threat. Since then, movements of the dollar in relation to the major convertible currencies have been subject to three influences: the early conjunctural downturn of the us economy; the greater volatility of interest rates resulting from the monetarist turn of the Federal Reserve in 1979; and the impossibilist economic programme of the Reagan administration.

International monetary instability cannot fail to be aggravated as the fiscal and monetary components of us economic policy contradict each other, and as financial innovations in the United States leave banks even greater freedom to escape the exhortations of the Federal Reserve. Once the total demand for credit becomes fairly insensitive to internal rates and the whole structure of interest becomes pegged to conditions on the money market, the money supply and interest rates may rise at the same time. Very large and sharp variations in interest rates will then be necessary to change the way in which private agents perceive the behaviour of the central bank.

International financial operators are therefore subject to sudden changes in the rates of the us market and to unforseeable delays or sharp reactions on the part of the central banks that manage the other major convertible currencies. The main lesson to be drawn from the new international monetary conditions is that the West as a whole (excluding Japan) is more dependent upon US interest rates than it was in the 1973—79 period. At the same time, highly unbalanced patterns are now becoming possible, in which the following characteristics may all coexist with one another:

Surplus trade balance
High inflation
High interest rates
Rising exchange rate

Deficit trade balance Low inflation Low interest rates Falling exchange rate

This surprising and extremely unstable pattern has several times characterized us—West German relations in 1980 and 1981. It completely transforms the structural polarity that previously determined the trend-setting dollar-mark rate of exchange. It reflects the deep sense of doubt in the international financial community that various countries will

be able to overcome stagflation. Past hopes, based upon apparent changes in economic policy, have been quickly dashed and replaced by more volatile expectations. It is thus possible that a sudden widening of uncovered exchange-rate differences will temporarily not be balanced by the fear of short-term devaluation of the currency that benefits from the highest nominal rate of return. A situation of that kind induces such a sizeable flow of liquid capital through the exchange markets that other countries are forced to raise their interest rates.

IV. Four Scenarios

In the preceding pages, we have tried to define the crucial macroeconomic articulations of the leading capitalist economies. We have shown that monetary relations and balance-of-payments adjustments are intimately bound up with trends in the international division of labour, industrial structures, and the formation of national prices and incomes—in short, with everything that shapes a system of growth. The complementary or contradictory relations between national growth-systems have the greatest influence upon changes in international monetary organization. But such organization is far from being a passive phenomenon. It endows monetary constraint with precise forms that determine the possible schemas combined in a concrete national conjuncture, as well as the synchronization or desynchronization of national conjunctures.

The period opened by the second oil price shock already points to substantial changes in the economic relations analysed above. We may legitimately ask whether a new phase in the transformation of the world economy is now emerging. These concerns are close to the World Bank analysis, which ends with the forecast that world growth will remain lower throughout the 1980s. Yet we do not share the method employed by these experts. In our view, the present epoch of 'major crisis' is dominated by large-scale qualitative changes in international relations, whose precise forms and macroeconomic effects are still fairly unclear. Today, as opposed to periods in which a growth-system was firmly established, it seems illusory to chart a middle course of least tension. It is even impossible to define with a minimum of credibility a single most probable hypothesis that can structure our analysis of secondary variants. The world economy is no longer in a 'corridor' in which structurally incorporated principles of regulation allow a medium-growth option to be pursued through tension-reducing mechanisms that never fail to appear.

Instead it would seem more realistic to compare the very different outcomes that might arise from the global competition of the major capitalist economies in the present epoch of transition and crisis. Such scenarios are not so much an exercise in 'futurology' as an attempt to elucidate the potentials for manœuvre and redeployment which might be captured by various long-term political strategies. Based on our preceding analysis of successive regimes of international monetary regulation and of transformations in the international division of labour, we can propose four different sets of hypotheses about the possible outcome of the great monetary instability of the early eighties.

First Scenario: General Stagflation

This combination displays the following principal features. First, the contradictions of us policy keep interest rates high, slowing down the restructuring of industry and encouraging defence of short-term gains. Secondly, the European countries, each forced to respond to the us monetary conjuncture, also maintain high interest rates. Thirdly, the transformation of manufacturing industry is greatly retarded by the lack of industrial policies and the unfavourable financial environment. Eventually, however, joblessness reaches an intolerable level in Western Europe, and a rampant, purely defensive protectionism gradually supplants stark liberalism and leads to the introduction of various work-sharing measures. As a result, the burgeoning tertiarization of the economy reinforces the dualist tendencies that play a major role in the vicious circle of stagflation. Meanwhile Japan is equally unable to accomplish its shift towards 'social growth'. Its rising exports continue to impose heavy constraints upon international trade in manufactured goods. Internationalization of the ven thus remains a phenomenon of limited scope.

Monetary policies take the cohesion of interest rates more closely into account. Conflicts between a budgetary policy that has to accept permanent deficits and a monetary policy oriented towards the foreign exchange market may grow less tense as controls are introduced. This crisis scenario of gradual decay may entail that, purely as a result of defensive measures in Western Europe (exchange controls and protectionist agreements), monetary instability will lead to a strengthening of the EMS and the formation of three monetary blocs. By the end of the decade, this would change the conditions for growth just as a reversal of population trends was easing the unemployment problem in various countries.

The rest of the world pays the truly grim price for a decade of stagnation in the industrialized countries. World trade slows down in keeping with the worst scenario for world demand. The protectionism of the industrialized countries, together with the mounting financial burden, considerably reduces the export-derived purchasing power available for internal accumulation. The only favourable aspect is the slow-rising real price of oil, the alleviation provided by oil surpluses and the attentuation of financial strains stemming from the oil 'shocks'.

Second Scenario: The Restored Vigour of American Capitalism

Industrial circles manage to exploit the doctrinal debates raging in American political life in order to gain acceptance for the idea of industrial regeneration. The danger of losing technological supremacy in electronics to the Japanese gives rise to a genuine industrial-supply policy. With this in view, the AFL-CIO agrees to tailor wage demands to the massive state-guaranteed investments partly financed by an industrial reconstruction fund.

The spread of flexible automation, as a new model of organizing industrial production, allows productivity gains to be reconciled with

short runs through the use of polyvalent equipment that reduces the cost of fixed capital. Thanks to the new possibilities opened by diversification and the renewal of manufactured durable goods, the typical American model of consumption finds a new lease of life. The result is a growth in individual isolation and the use of short-life objects. Automation, telecommunications and the everyday use of computers combine to transform the principles of socialized life styles and to reduce social costs in health care (the preponderance of advance diagnosis and protection over intensive treatment), education (permanent training through the mass use of videos) and town-planning (the reorganization of space allowed by work at a distance).

Japan engages in global competition with the United States to establish a new system of growth. Technological and financial relations intensify between the two countries. The hub of the international capital market shifts to the Pacific region. The financial opening of Japan makes the yen-dollar exchange rate the lodestar of international monetary relations. The structure of Japanese imports undergoes diversification. All these trends drive Western Europe into decline. The industries of European countries make uncoordinated attempts to sign sub-contracting agreements with us and Japanese companies. European countries benefit from the spin-offs of a new growth-system, especially the lower structural component of inflation. Yet they face more acute technological dependence and reduced autonomy in the organization of society.

The international monetary system again comes to revolve around a strong dollar. After a yen surge, in which international financial holdings move away from European currencies, the yen-dollar relationship tends to stabilize through the opening of Japan to us exports and a marked reduction in the Japanese trade surplus. Benefiting from the lower world inflation implicit in this scenario, the European countries are able to pursue a weak currency policy that corresponds to their technological dependence in a situation of renewed growth. Those which most resolutely follow this policy, signing numerous technological sub-contracting agreements, manage to lock into the new international circuits shaped by changing social demand in the United States and Japan. The non-European share of eec external trade rises to such an extent that the European Monetary System loses its reason for existence. The Common Market gradually dissolves into a world market polarized between the United States and Japan.

Third Scenario: Western Europe Invents a New Form of 'Mixed Economy'

This set of hypotheses assumes that inflation continues to rack the United States and that conflicts of interest among social groups preclude the crystallization of a 'new frontier' project. A 'zero-sum society' within the United States, and divergences of interest with its allies over the hotbeds of tension in the world, cause a new isolationism to appear in us policy. It becomes impossible to maintain the split which emerged in the seventies between the preponderant role of the dollar and the relative decline of the United States. As the hopes aroused by Reagan's election die away, a violent attack on the dollar opens a new stage of currency rivalry.

This scenario, unlike the others, crucially assumes an active role for Western Europe. The worsening monetary instability calls forth greater European monetary cooperation, while rising unemployment dangerously fuels social tensions and the public backlash against austerity policies. Whether because a new political majority takes shape in France's European partners, or because the labour unions take energetic action throughout the EEC, the French positions acquire sufficient following for their application to be seriously contemplated. The employment question becomes a priority that gives rise to joint initiatives; coordinated reduction of working hours, harmonization of social legislation, industrial cooperation to master automation and computer technologies, and so on. Guided by industrial priorities, the rate of investment rises in most EEC countries. Long-term community finances are obtained from outside creditors. Coordinated steerage of interest rates, together with the creation of a European monetary fund and graduated protectionist measures against non-European competitors, allows the EEC countries to loosen their dependence upon us monetary policy.

From the point of view of international monetary regulation, this set of hypotheses suggests that a tripolar system will emerge. However, the conditions for its operation remain quite unclear. Should the special drawing rights be encouraged as a means of international settlement reflecting the symmetry of the three blocs? Could gold return to something like the role it played under the tripartite agreement following the devaluation of the franc in 1936? Which rules of balance-of-payments adjustment would give a precise form to monetary constraint among the three poles? Can any rules guarantee both the autonomy of social choices within each bloc and the relative stability of inter-bloc exchange rates?

Fourth Scenario: Financial Collapse and Fragmentation of the World Economy

Although an international financial crisis does not lend itself to forecasting techniques, it is not difficult to imagine the conditions under which one might break out. After all, there have been a number of near-red alerts since the summer of 1974, and a historical perspective is enough to convince us that financial crises are a common event in international relations. There is nothing intrinsically outlandish in the idea that a major crisis will penalize the current monetary instability and excessive debt trends. Indeed, unlike the case of national banking systems, there is no lender of last resort with sovereign authority over all banks operating in foreign currencies. At the brink of catastrophe, refinancing operations depend upon a common risk-evaluation by a number of monetary authorities endowed with equal rights yet subject to perhaps widely varying political imperatives.

Let us suppose, for example, that conflict sharpens among the different factions seeking to impose their doctrines on us economic policy and that the short-term evolution of exchange rates grows ever more chaotic. Lenders, borrowers and middlemen then become disoriented by sudden interest-rate fluctuations and the resulting disorder of exchange rates. The tapping of money demand grows ever more unstable, since speculative factors dominate the motives for finance operations. Interna-

tional liquidity flows become so abrupt and reverse-flows so unpredictable that the central banks are unable to control the exchange markets. Borrowers face a growing risk of misestimating interest-rate trends and taking a decision at the wrong moment. Some borrowers, already forced to bring forward repayments, suffer a huge rise in their debt burden. Inter-bank rates and short-term debt schedules fluctuate so wildly that indexation clauses cease to operate and some banks have to incur heavy losses by contracting very short-term loans.

In this situation, it is quite likely that the insolvency of one state borrower will immediately throw a number of banks into difficulty. Nowadays, as opposed to past financial crises, technical organization and credit lines allow the central bank of the parent company to bail out banks operating in Eurocurrencies. But this mechanism will not necessarily apply in every situation. If monetary disorder reaches a certain level, it will exacerbate the quarrels we have seen among western governments in 1981. Debt-rescheduling agreements, stalling practices and laborious discussions may well be necessary to establish a multi-currency credit chain, at a time when an almost instantaneous reaction is required. The financial crisis would then assume its classic form: destruction of the Eurobanks and conversion of Eurodeposits into deposits on the banks of the major components of certain banking systems; sharp contraction of the Euromarkets and collapse of the weakest international banking consortia; a squeeze on the refinancing of borrowers and a fall in world trade triggering international price disinflation.

A large-scale financial crisis would probably lead to a fracturing of the world economy. Monetary blocs would take shape, but not in the conditions favouring cooperation that marked the third set of hypotheses. The rival blocs would not be closed to one another, since Europe and Japan would remain militarily dependent upon the United States. Still, protectionism would be more pronounced than in other hypotheses, and there would be a marked drop in living standards. Elements of a war economy would certainly make their appearance—for example, an extension of the public sector in Western Europe (further nationalizations in France); more advanced restructuring of industry on a national basis; a recentralization of planning; and control of prices and incomes.

V. The Watershed of the Crisis?

These medium-term scenarios involve contrasting representations of the historical process. By comparing them with one another, we may now attempt to define the crossroads that the world economic system is liable to face.

The analysis underlying these scenarios has given a precise content to the notion of hierarchy on which the cohesion of international economic relations depends. Clearly hierarchy should be dynamically conceived, not statically defined by reference to a military image. Hierarchy in international monetary organization stems from two tendencies that conflictually coexist with each other: a fracturing force resulting from the struggle of nations to establish and safeguard the economic bases of their sovereignty, and an integrative force bound up with monetary functions

beyond national frontiers. A monetary order maintains a compromise between these tendencies so long as the constraining rules that determine the form of international monetary adjustment are compatible with renewal of the conditions for growth. When the renewal process strikes deep roots, the rigid monetary rules which used to assure the cohesion of the system begin to accumulate tensions. In the crisis of a hierarchical pattern of international relations, monetary constraints disintegrate under the impact of strains at critical points of the existing monetary system. This process weakens the unifying force of international monetary functions and bolsters the fracturing tendencies. National currencies again become political weapons which respond to the intensification of competition. The search for possible future patterns assumes that one can identify the stage reached in the disintegration of the old monetary order. The 1980s watershed has brought the fracturing process to the fore as a result of the creditors' reaction to devaluation of their assets. Their reaction marks the limits to uncontrolled expansion of international liquidities by the debtors. Scenarios Two and Three adumbrate a reorganization of the world economic system driven by the United States and Western Europe respectively—a reorganization which brings into view highly distinct systems of growth. Scenarios One and Four describe two ways in which the process of fracturing may continue to dominate the crisis: an insidious process in which fracturing develops in a climate of rampant protectionism (Scenario One) and/or a violent process triggered by international financial instability (Scenario Four).

It may be asked why we have proposed these four scenarios and no others. The delimitation, in fact, results from our relatively short time perspective, the 1980s, and from our diagnosis of the current phase of the crisis. To be more precise, the scenarios are underpinned by three central hypotheses:

- (a) The macertainties of US economic policy. These refer to the impact of the private financial innovations which have forced monetary policy into a deflationary stance. There is major uncertainty about the discordant impulses of budgetary and monetary policy, and the delayed action of the elements of supply policy. In particular, it is not known how real interest rates will respond to the likely disinflation, or how a protracted tightening of financial conditions will affect long-range investment.
- (b) The degree of financial instability. This will determine whether the fracturing tendency involves progressive disinflation under the impact of prolonged stagnation or whether it takes the form of abrupt deflation triggered by a financial crisis. Such an eventuality presupposes that the freezing of cooperation among the monetary authorities of creditor-countries gives free rein to private forces. If deflation is expressed in a conjunction of high real rates of interest and worsening terms of trade for the largest borrowers, then the purchasing power derived from exports may prove insufficient, at a constant rhythm of internal growth, to cover the heavier financial burdens due to straightforward debt renewal.
- (c) The perception of social tensions within Europe. More than its American and Japanese competitors, Europe is sensitive to an exacerbation of social tensions and class struggle resulting from prolonged stagnation. The

shaky political regimes in certain countries, the greater susceptibility for frontal political struggles to emerge between social groups, the existence of incompatible national projects for sustained growth—all these conditions make Europe the site at which a break in the tacit compromise based on the revival of past growth may have dangerous consequences. The main indicators of tension in Europe are therefore the unemployment level and the reduction of household purchasing power. The chief area of uncertainty is the tolerance threshold in each country.

The reader will have noticed that our central hypotheses do not bring in the Eastern bloc. Japan or the OPEC countries. With regard to the Eastern bloc, we may envisage a continuing climate of tension, reflected in a weakening of economic links with the West forged in the period of détente. It is agreed, however, that this deterioration will not be enough to alter significantly the relations among Western countries expressed in the above scenarios. Concerning Japan, we believe that in the medium term it will have difficulty in achieving the social transformation necessary for renewed endogenous growth. In fact, the limitations on Japanese internal demand are due not merely to reversible economicpolicy options, but to a number of important structural blockages: the constraints of space and pollution, inadequate social legislation, support for agriculture, and high ground-rents. As to the OPEC countries, a third oilprice shock seems unlikely in view of the effort in the industrialized countries to save energy and to cover a greater share of energy needs from internal resources. Nor does the persistence of low growth in a deflationary climate work on the side of the oil producers. It is even possible that real energy prices will decline in the medium term, no doubt with fluctuations that will bring them closer to the trends of other raw materials.

Finally the future of the world economy will continue to depend first and foremost upon whether us preponderance is reconsolidated or whether a new system of regional economies supersedes the present hierarchy. In our opinion it is this second possibility which offers the greatest potential for the relaunching of sustained capital accumulation, yet it also involves the greatest risks of explosive class conflict and destructive inter-capitalist rivalry. Only a fracturing into regions, combined with a system of inter-regional monetary relations managed by the states of the dominant poles could give European capitalism the necessary freedom to pioneer a new model of growth. Yet it is highly doubtful that the capitalist parties themselves could undertake this stupendous project; what might be imaginable instead would be an original synthesis of social democracy and decentralized, contractural planning that transformed the very content of growth. Such is the vision that captivates broad sections of the French Socialist Party. But-needless to say the obstacles to this project are immense and its minimal presuppositions would involve a reorientation of the social market economy in West Germany, further unification of the EEC, the establishment of a real degree of monetary autonomy from the depressive influences of American policies, andmost importantly—an unprecedented solidarity and political joint action by the European Left.

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The AFL-CIO's Second Century

Mike Davis

The American Federation of Labor celebrated its centenary last year. It is one of the world's great conservative institutions, with a stability of internal rule and ideology that might make even the Bank of England gasp. Although the United States has had nineteen presidents since the founding of the AFL in 1881, the Federation has had only four. Samuel Gompers, aside from being a well-known white supremacist, was remarkable for his life-long opposition to social insurance. William Green, for his part, split the American labour movement in the 1930s rather than accept the infusion of new militancy and members represented by the industrial unions. George Meany, in turn, ensured that the reunited AFL-Cio played its loyal role in the international crusade against socialism and radical trade unionism. Lane Kirkland—Meany's handgroomed successor and a Southern aristocrat by birth—preserves this traditional mould with his enthusiasm for the new cold war (he was a charter member of the ultra-hawkish Committee for the Present Danger).

Any rumination on the future of American labour must begin with these sordid and familiar facts. The sheer purdurance of the Gompersian legacy is astonishing; and, far from being the incarnation of social progress as it likes to pretend, the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO is more like an ancien regime in slow decay. Alone of the major Western trade-union movements, the AFL-CIO has presided over a steadily declining relative membership—today sunk to its 1940 level. Untouched by the progressive achievements of European unionism in the late sixties and early seventies particularly the new concerns with workers' control in the labour process and with the plight of the low-wage sector—the American labour movement now stands in the forefront of retreat. The epidemic trade-union 'givebacks' in the United States have become an open inspiration for the recent assaults by European employers' federations upon local wage indexation and employment rights (the annulment of the scala mobile in Italy, the deindexation of wages in Belgium, the attack on the traditional eight-hour day on British railroads, and so on). Meanwhile, the London Economist has invoked Reagan's destruction of the air traffic controllers' union as a model for dealing with militant British unions. It suddenly seems that the malaise of American trade unionism may be contagious.

A tempting starting-point for comments like these is to refer to the 'crisis' of the American labour movement: indeed some good books were written on exactly this subject in the early 1960s (not to mention the 1920s). Identification of the penultimate crisis of us trade unionism has been so perennial, as have been prefigurations of its renewal, that it is important to distinguish parameters of this 'long crisis' from the more specific features of the current phase. For example, there has been an almost generic difference between the evolution of the postwar American and West European trade-union movements. Despite earlier cold war and confessional divisions in the European working class, the general trend since the early sixties has been towards a greater economic unification of the proletariat via the extension of welfarism and the social wage, through the steady expansion of union membership, and, particularly in the French and Italian cases, through enlarged union control on the shopfloor. In contrast, American trade unionism over the last generation has increasingly come to tolerate—and, indeed, sometimes to exploit the divisive segmentation of the wage labour-force.

A Movement in Retreat

Let me suggest a few concrete illustrations of the divergent paths of the modern European and American trade-union movements:

- (a) Since 1950 the struggle for a political welfare state has become, at most, a subsidiary goal of the American trade-union movement; instead the more powerful unions, such as the auto and steel workers, opted for longterm strategies of funding health and pension plans through collective bargaining. The struggle for the expansion of these 'supplemental benefits' has been the pivot of the entire postwar system of wage/productivity bargaining, with advantage obviously accruing to unions in oligopolistic and capital-intensive industries. As a direct consequence of this piecemeal pursuit of private welfare states in single industries, the campaign for national, comprehensive social legislation has been weakened while millions of workers in less powerful unions or unorganized sectors have been left with poor and inadequate coverage.
- (b) This dualism at the level of welfarism has been matched by the notorious twin-tiered structure of American wages. The concept of the 'solidarity wage' as practised by Scandinavian or Italian unions (or faintly proclaimed by the Tuc), with the explicit goal of reducing wage differentials, has no resonance within the present-day American labour movement. In the absence of any conscious, overall strategy for fighting for a more equitable wage structure, us unions have acquiesced in the expansion of highly balkanized labour markets. Moreover, the inflationary decade of the 1970s witnessed the greatest widening of differentials in the entire twentieth century. To take only the case of unionized workers: while steel and auto contracts gave their members respective increases of 74% and 40% above the domestic consumer price index in the 1970-80 period, organized catering and garment workers suffered real declines of 13% and 24%.
- (c) Rhetoric aside, the AFL-C10 has implicitly accepted a no-growth policy in the face of epochal changes in the occupational structure and

technological base of production. Whereas most European trade-union movements have made major advances in the new sectors of the economy, American unions find themselves in the extraordinary position of fighting and refighting once again battles begun decades earlier. The current Southern organizing drive, for example, is a revival of Operation Dixie first initiated in 1946: over the intervening years the AFL-CIO made only the most desultory progress in unionizing the rapidly industrializing South. Indeed in some industries—textile is one example—contemporary organization is only a fraction of what had been originally achieved in the thirties. Several unions never recouped their losses to employers' aggression and anti-communism in the late forties; and the Cio failed to complete its historic mission of comprehensively unionizing manufacturing industry (over half of consumer-goods production remains unorganized). This deficiency of unionization in traditional sectors, however, is today overshadowed by the even more signal failure of the AFL-CIO to penetrate the so-called 'information economy', the largest and most rapidly growing department of production. Most resistent to unions have been the strategic centres of communication and electronic hardware manufacture: 'Silicon Valley', IBM and Texas Instruments all remain bastions of the open shop.

The conjoint failures of union organization in the Sunbelt and in the dynamic growth poles of the economy have only been partially compensated by the surge of public-sector unionism, especially between 1965 and 1973. The public-sector unions are the fresh blood of an otherwise sclerotic movement and they have been responsible for the most impressive gains. Yet, in the aggregate, the AFL-Cio itself estimates that its component unions have succeeded in recruiting only two million of the thirty-five million new workers added to the labour-force between 1960 and 1980; deducting the gains of the public-sector unions would leave an absolute decline in unionism. This low and tendentially falling level of unionization in the private sector (only 16% today) has granted us capital a unique freedom in the redeployment of investment and the geographical decentralization of production.

(d) With a few honourable exceptions, unions have resisted any real renewal of rank-and-file participation. Already in the late forties there was a clear tendency, even in the most progressive unions, towards the replacement of workplace self-organization—especially shop-steward networks and union committees—with smaller cadres of full-time union professionals, who were often appointed rather than elected. The increasing abdication by the unions of the struggle over the organization of the labour process (part of the 'trade-off' in wage/productivity bargaining) went hand-in-hand with the atrophy of shopfloor grievance procedures and direct action traditions. Ultimately in the late sixties a new generation of workers began to rebel against their powerlessness on the production line and some of these 'wildcat' revolts coalesced into movements for union democracy and a return to militancy: Teamsters United Rank and File (later, Teamsters for a Democratic Union), the United National Caucus and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in auto, Miners for Democracy, and the Right to Strike movement in steel. Although residues of several of these movements remain—above all in the Teamsters—their challenge has largely been defeated or

deflected. Recession and growing demonstrialization contributed to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of younger, more militant workers; while, in other cases, union leaderships were able to divide and rule through clientage relationships with older workers. If necessary, the insurgent movements were simply repressed: something which occured in the arch-liberal auto workers as well as in the gangster-dominated teamsters. At any event, the rank-and-file tumult of the sixties and seventies (whose delayed-reaction climax was undoubtedly the 111-day miners strike in 1977–78) has subsided without regenerating, at least in private-sector unions, the broad layer of activism and informal leadership that had been the wellspring of the early cro and which epitomized the renovation of European unionism between 1967 and 1973.

Carter's False Deal

Thus by the onset of the Nixon recession of 1974/75, two of the movements which might have contributed most to a root-and-branch revival of American labour—the mass black liberation movement and the wildcat rebellion in industry—were largely defeated and disorganized, while the third dynamic and renovative force—public-sector unionism—was increasingly floundering in the wake of the fiscal crisis of the state and the anti-tax backlash of the electorate. In this conjuncture, the more progressive unions—like the two large public employee unions and the auto workers—were unable to effect any shift in power within the AFL-CIO. Despite a bitter temporary split over the Executive's refusal to endorse McGovern in 1972, as well as the UAW's quixotic attempt to form an alliance with the renegade teamsters, Meany firmly maintained his authority during the Ford and Carter years. Faced with the increasing transfer of job creation from the Northeast to the Sunbelt, together with the most concerted management offensive in a generation, a retrenched Executive concentrated resources on a major lobbying campaign for congressional 'labour law reform'. The reforms were intended to ease the way for new union organization, particularly in the South and the so-called 'right-to-work' states, by providing the National Labor Relations Board with effective powers to enforce union certification elections. At the time of the legislative battle, several giant non-union employers, like the notorious J.P. Stevens textile empire, were openly defying the febrile NLRB and refusing to accept union election victories.

In one sense the proposed reforms were entirely modest and straightforward in their purpose. In contrast to earlier campaigns to repeal the reactionary Taft-Hartley Act, labour law reform asked for little more than an effective version of the industrial relations status quo. In another sense, however, the lobbying effort was the maximum thrust of the AFL-CIO's fundamentally conservative response to the crisis of the labour movement. First, the reforms were geared to support an top-down public relations approach to the organization of new workers; with few genuine exceptions, the AFL-CIO eschews the strategy of 'internal' organizing

¹ In the teamsters union, where Roy Williams recently succeeded the late Frank Pitzsimmons, repression against dissident members continues unabated. At the last convention the election of business agents was formally outlawed, seasonal workers—a large minority of the membership—were disfranchised, and a special loyalty oath was introduced to prevent the discussion of union business with 'outsiders'.

through democratic shop committees that built the early cio. In a conventional recruiting campaign, rank-and-file activity is strictly subordinated to an organizing staff who, in turn, take their orders directly from a union head office. One reason why there has been such a disturbing rise in the number of decertifications in recently organized shops is the weakness of the original union infrastructure within the workplace.

Secondly, labour law reform was purposefully moderated in attempt to win support from at least certain sections of 'enlightened' corporate capital. Indeed the lobbying drive might be seen as part of a larger attempt to renegotiate the informal compact between big unions and big business which arose during the Korean War boom and was symbolized by the famous 1950 UAW-GM contract—the so-called 'Treaty of Detroit'—that stabilized labour relations within the auto industry. The Carter Labor Department was particularly active in trying to create neo-corporatist buttresses for traditional collective bargaining. This search for a higher-level formalization of labour-management 'diplomacy'—congruent with the AFL-Cio's simultaneous efforts to strengthen the juridical regulation of industrial relations—culminated in the formation of the ill-fated Labor-Management Group, whose chief function seems to be to allow Lane Kirkland to sip martinis with Clifton Garvin of Exxon.

Thirdly, the reform lobby was also intended to reinforce labour's waning influence within the higher councils of the Democratic Party. Organized labour had traditionally been one of the three pillars of the New Deal Democratic power-structure (the other two were big-city political machines and the redneck fieldoms of Southern Democracy), but the clout of the trade unions, like that of the other two ancient power centres, declined dramatically in the early seventies with the paradoxically parallel growth of the importance of multinational corporations, middle-class liberals and minorities within the party. The great delusion of the AFL-CIO Executive in 1977–78 was that, without any significant reinvigoration of its own grassroots, it could dramatically reassert its influence in the political system.

Labour law reform was, thus, the cornerstone of a strategy for the top-down revival of the labour movement through new judicial safeguards, an up-dated deal with big business and a reconsolidation of support within the Democratic Party. It was a bureaucratic alternative to any kind of 'bottom-up' renaissance of the movement based upon the formation of grassroots coalitions combined with greater union internal democracy and inter-union solidarity. In the event, the reform legislation, despite labour's most massive and expensive lobbying blitz in thirty years, was defeated in an overwhelmingly Democratic congress. This was more than a crushing personal defeat for Meany; it was also a revelation of deep shifts in the command of electoral power as the newly-formed Business Roundtable, comprising the largest corporations in the country, mounted a brilliantly organized counter-lobby. As a tragi-comedic anticlimax to labour's false deal under the Democrats, Carter attempted, in the last days of his administration, to create a desperate simulacrum of the British 'social contract'. Who now remembers the hyberbolic rhetoric and high hopes surrounding the launching of the Carter-Kirkland

'National Accord'—a dead letter within a few months of its announcement?

The Bosses' Offensive

In this century there have been three previous national drives by employers' associations against the labour movement. The first, the so-called 'Mass Employers' Offensive' of 1902-08, was directed against the growing power of AFL craft unions during the great turn-of-the-century building boom. The second, the 'American Plan' of the 19208, was a brutally successful attempt to efface labour's wartime gains and to generalize nationally the open shop—by the twenties AFL membership had declined by almost 40%. The third campaign in the 1944-50 period was less concerned with union-busting per se than with the reestablishment of managerial prerogatives on the shopfloor, the exorcism of radical influences within the cro, and the subordination of union power to the exigencies of corporate planning. The permanent legacy of this offensive was the Taft-Hartley Act of 1946 which outlawed most forms of inter-union solidarity and provided for the passage of state 'right-towork' laws. Significantly, each of these three escalations of the class struggle occured against the backdrop of much publicized attempts at capital-labour cooperation: the National Civic Federation during 1902-14; the discussions of the pacific virtues of scientific management between the AFL and leading employers in the twenties (later resurfacing in the 'Swope Plan' in the 1930s); and the long-forgotten Labor-Management Conference on postwar reconstruction called by Truman in 1945.

The current employers offensive is also being accompanied by the sweetening mood music of what Business Week likes to pretend is a new era of 'non-adversary' industrial relations. In fact, as the head of the auto-workers union complained a few years ago, the corporations have launched 'out-and-out class war' on the unions. According to their strategic concept of the aims of this new class war, employers divide into two factions: the downright revanchists and the less extreme revisionists.

The 'revanchists' are the hawks of management who advocate class war en outrance through union-busting and the establishment of the open shop. They are organizationally imbricated with the New Right's networks and one of their chief lobbies is the ominously named National Committee for a Union-Free Environment. Although not incorrectly stereotyped as composed of Sunbelt entrepreneurs like Joseph Coors, the reactionary Colorado beer king, or the Milliken textile clan of South Carolina; the revanchists also include some corporate leviathans like the DuPont empire (recently merged with the oil and coal conglomerate, Conoco). The United States is unique amongst the five major capitalist economies in having such a large and powerful fraction of capital advocating a 'Taiwanese' solution to labour problems. In 1980 alone the NLRB received more than 15,000 complaints from workers fired for pro-union activity.

The 'revisionists', on the other hand, include the majority of the top two hundred corporations grouped together in the Business Roundtable. Their ostensible goal, at least as discerned in the most recent round of

conflicts, is the revision and replacement of the present system of wage bargaining with a far more decentralized and flexible pattern of industrial relations (the 'neo-Japanese' solution?). Their revisionism above all bears upon three aspects of the old system of union-management negotiation: relatively rigid internal plant job-structures, wage indexation (including 'creeping' supplementals), and 'pattern bargaining'.

Ironically the first two of these obstacles to 'non-adversary' labour relations were originally key trade-offs in the formation of the apparatus of postwar collective bargaining. Minutely differentiated, contracturally codified 'internal labour markets', for example, represented industrial unionism's acceptance of the Taylorist fragmentation of work in exchange for stabilized job seniority and the restriction of the formerly arbitrary powers of foremen and line management. Likewise the linkage of wages and supplemental benefits to growing productivity via multi-year contracts was a quid pro quo for the unions' tacit abandonment of the fight against speedup. Now both of these former functional supports of managerial power have been called into question by slowing productivity due to the ultimate limitations of the parcellized organization of work itself, and, more specifically, to the international competitive pressures on a number of us basic industries. Ford and General Motors's recent success in exploiting the Chrysler precedent of trade-union contractural 'givebacks' involving wages, supplementals and working conditions has started a chain reaction which is spreading through the unionized sectors of the rubber, meatpacking, steel, farm implement, trucking and airline industries. 'Concessionary bargaining' has now affected at least a quarter of the unionized plants in the United States and, during the first half of 1982, almost 60% of the unions bargaining with employers accepted real wage freezes or reductions in their new contracts. Wielding the ultimate weapons of plant closure or relocation, the manufacturing and transport sectors are likely to succeed in imposing the first major deceleration of wages since 1938.2 This phenomena is all the more striking in that it affects those relatively powerful sections of the industrial working class who were protected from the wage attrition of the 1970s.

Less visible than the wave of givebacks, but perhaps ultimately even more important, has been the erosion of pattern bargaining. Wage-setting since the 1960s has been profoundly influenced by the spread of escalator clauses and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAS) which promoted increased homogeneity and 'patterning' of contractural provisions within industries, and, in some cases, between industries. In 1964 the traditional pace-setting role of the basic steel contract for metal fabrication industries was replicated in the transport and distributive sectors by Jimmy Hoffa's

² The most recent wave of giveback demands by management, however, is encountering a suffening resistance from local union leaderships and rank-and-file members. In October the Chrysler workers, who had previously surrendered more than one billion dollars in wage and benefit concessions, overwhelmingly rejected the new contract submitted by their international leadership. This was the first time in the history of the UAW that the membership had vetoed a contract with one of the Big Three auto makers (although the recent GM settlement was only obtained with the barest of majorities) Meanwhile in the steelworkers there is massive opposition to the industry's demands for aix billion dollars in takeaways, and a national steel strike may be possible in 1983 (it would be the first in twenty-four years)

National Master Freight Agreement in inter-state trucking. As a result, union bargaining in key sectors was orchestrated into a triennial periodicity partially disassociated from the pulses of the business cycle, and union wages tended to become centralized via pace-setters and the generalization of comparable collas. Although collas in 1978 covered only 9.5% of the total labour force, they included three-quarters of manufacturing plants with more than a thousand workers. Thus for unions in strong labour-market positions, the informal rise of pattern bargaining was tantamount, during the 1970s, to the protection against inflation offered in some European countries by official national wage indexation.

It is not surprising, therefore, that corporate 'revisionists' have been preoccupied with discovering tactics to fragment wage patterning, to desynchronize the bargaining cycle, and to sweep away broadly inclusive COLAS. In practice this has meant that concessionary bargaining has gone hand-in-hand with company 'breakouts' from national contracts-a trend that currently threatens the decomposition of most master contracts. If on a macroeconomic scale the fragmentation of bargaining implies the arrest of tendential wage drift; on a microeconomic scale it drastically reduces the power of union strike action and intensifies competition between unionized workers by making it easier to shift production between plants. As a GM executive recently admitted, the corporation expects to reap greater savings from its new plant level agreements than from the national wage freeze just conceded by the UAW. The ultimate trajectory of such a restructuring of collective bargaining might be a new industrial relations system based on highly individuated single-plant contracts and increased wage differentiation within the monopoly sector of the economy. With the concession of employment guarantees to certain strata of workers and some cosmetic attention to the 'quality of work life', such a system would not be unlike the Japanese model of decentralized company unionism which inspires cult devotion in many us business schools.

Working on Rancho Reagan

One can only wonder what ironical conversation was occuring between the ghosts of Samuel Gompers and Karl Marx on the January day in 1981 when the former head of an AFL craft union was inaugurated as the fortieth President of the United States.

Like the employers offensive, the labour strategy of the Reagan administration combines blunt confrontation with more subtle institutional revision. The hammer-blow, of course, was the destruction, by executive order, of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization and the blacklisting of its 11,400 members. Reagan's repression of PATCO—the most blatent attack on a union by a president since Cleveland used cavalry to break the Pullman strike in 1894—was directed preemptively against public-sector unionism in general. Faced with growing unrest and increasing militancy amongst federal employees, hundreds of thousands of whose jobs were directly threatened by the advent of Reaganomics, the Administration disarmed resistance with a single brutal stroke. (The success of this tactic, of course, was based on

the calculated risk that the other airline unions and the AFL-CIO would refuse to significantly aid PATCO: a gamble easily won.)

The most important initiative of the Reagan regime, however, has been its relentless drive to revise the entire juridical framework of industrial relations, foreclosing the regulatory and statutory space for class ligitation and legal reformism—a kind of labour law reform in reverse. Although some unionists had expected outright, counter-revolutionary assaults on the New Deal patrimony (dismantling the minimum wage, repeal of the Wager Act, a national right-to-work law, and so on), the Reaganites—undoubtedly sensitive to the fact that their victory depended on the support of the majority of white, male working-class voters—have resorted to more disguised actions: packing the National Labor Relations Board with new pro-business appointees, stripping the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of most of its modest powers, and so on. Meanwhile, Senator Ornn Hatch of Utah, a ringleader of resistance to labor law reform in 1977-78, has become head of the key Senate Labor Committee. These changes, in the context of an increasingly states'-rights-oriented Supreme Court majority, can only presage an incremental federal 'deregulation' of industrial relations that is complementary to the corporate revisionist project of a weaker, more decentralized system of labour representation in general.

Kirkland and the Neo-Liberals

Any prognosis of the future of American trade unionism must distinguish between the strategy of the national AFL-CIO and the practice of local trade unionists. This distinction is important not only because of the geographical and sectoral specificity of the crisis of unionism, but especially because there is a new ferment in the grassroots. The traumatic shocks of recent years have led to a greater politicization even, limitedly, radicalization—of the lower ranks of the trade-union bureaucracy. This process is most evident in the public-sector unions where explicitly social-democratic currents have gained ground, but there have been significant reverberations within the older industrial and craft unions as well. One important development has been the widespread formation of local labour-community alliances to fight against the wholesale plant closures which threaten to turn so many small industrial cities into ghost-towns. Even more innovative, and thus more discomforting to many national union leaderships, has been the appearance of 'political unions' designed to promote the self-organization of workers trapped in the huge ghetto of low-wage employment. 'Nine-to-Five' (or, alternately, Service Employees International Union 925) is the unique example of a once parish movement of clerical workers, largely organized by feminists, which has achieved autonomous affiliation with the second largest public-sector and service union. Meanwhile in the Southwest, the recently formed 'American Federation of Workers' unifies farm workers unions in Texas, Arizona and Florida together with the California-based Brotherhood of General Workers into an international workers' organization, inspired by socialist politics and reminiscent of the rww, which especially aims to organize the undocumented workers who have become the backbone of the border economy. These examples could easily be multiplied.

The organic crisis of the American labour movement, therefore, is slowly producing its own antibodies, and there is much in the current activity of local trade unionism and alliance-building that could furnish a basis for an alternative labour politics. The enduring problem, however, remains the depth of disorganization and demoralization within the trade-union rank and file, and, indeed, within working-class communities in general. Although partially the unavoidable consequence of the recession and structural changes in the economy, the deepest roots of this disorganization lie in the two-generation old discontinuity in labour militancy. compounded by the failure of the sixties' labour revolts and the disintegration of the mass civil rights and black liberation movements. The current generation of American workers, the most educated in world history, suffer not so much from the absence of 'consciousness' or social perception, as from the lack of any shared, sedimented experience of collective struggle and organization. A 'critical mass' of cooperative counter-experience is the necessary precondition to move beyond atomization and individualism; but such a culture of struggle and common hope can only be slowly built through partial successes in battle and by the maturation of a rank-and-file leadership schooled in self-administered forms of organization. By these standards the us labour movement is still in a virtually molecular stage of reorganization.

In the meantime there is little in the current national perspectives of the APL-CIO that would appear to give much support to this imperative of grassroots mobilization. Kirkland, while introducing a more vigorous style into the Executive, remains basically the caretaker of the ancien regime. Although it is true that 'George the Plumber' would not very likely have allowed Solidarity Day 1981 to take place, Kirkland's motive in staging a mass demonstration of labour's legions in front of the White House was not to resurrect trade unionism as a movement, but to provide a safety-valve for the growing restiveness in union ranks. Instead of a national confrontation over the repression of PATCO or a coordinated resistance to the givebacks in basic industry, the APL-CIO leadership has once again pinned its principal hope on the revival of its influence within the Democratic Party. To this purpose the march on Washington was converted into a mere pep rally for 'Solidarity Day Two': getting out the vote for a Democratic midterm victory on November 2.

To the disconcertion, moreover, of social-democratic trade unionists the thrust of this partisan strategy is directed at mastering the technologies of electoral manipulation that the New Right used so devastatingly in 1980 rather than toward any leftward reformation of the Democratic programme or the building of new popular alliances. Indeed the Executive was in the van of the recently successful effort to roll back the McGovern reforms of the early seventies which had opened up the party to greater representation of minorities and women. At the same time, a number of leading labour chieftains have been publicly flirting with the so-called 'neo-liberals'—a current in the Democratic Party sometimes characterized as 'Reaganism with a human face'. In particular, Kirkland, together with Gottbaum of the public employees and Shanker of the teachers, has endorsed the strategy of 'reindustrialization' propounded by banker Felix Rohatyn, the former financial overlord of New York City who was responsible for purging thousands of municipal workers (all good

AFL-CIO members). In essence Rohatyn's proposals would commit the unions to concessionary bargaining on a national political scale. Whether through a tax-based incomes policy or more selective industry-by-industry agreements (or both), the unions would barter wage and working condition concessions in return for guarantees of reinvestment in the old industrial heartland. The key mechanism in this varient of a corporatist social contract would be a reborn 'Reconstruction Finance Corporation' dominated by the great banks.

Needless to say, Kirkland's support for neo-liberal economic gimmackery does not go down well with all sections of the trade-union leadership. On one hand, it assumes a scale of political involvement which is unacceptable to the Gompersian craft rearguard; while its submission, on the other hand, to so many of the premisses of rightwing economic orthodoxy (however cleverly confected as 'post-Keynesian' novelty) repels most of labour's open or closet social democrats. Crucial to the fate of this latter group, and the degree of their resistance to Kirkland's strategy, will be the evolution of the Kennedy wing of the party; if the Pretender himself makes an adaptation towards neo-liberalism and corporatism—a possibility that can't be ruled out—then a temporary ideological consensus would be highly likely. In the meantime, Kirkland has attempted to preclude political disunity in the Executive by establishing a new procedure whereby the union movement will preselect its presidential nominee before the Democratic primaries in 1984. What is being trumpeted as a 'labour candidacy' is in fact an unpalatable democratic centralism that entraps the leftwing of the Executive in support of whatever likely neo-liberal figure Kırkland and the majority decide to back.

Collateral with the neo-liberal vogue has been the renewed priority which the AFL-C10 has given to retrenchment and protectionism rather than to new organization or greater internationalism. A major battle for American labour's soul may, in some sense, already be in progress, with the very meaning of solidarity at stake. In the face of the real challenge of a changing international division of labour, quasi-racialist calls to defend American standards and products have been the easiest and most demagogic way out for embattled trade-union bureaucrats. Virtual 'yellow peril' hysteria over Asian imports has been increasingly echoed by internal protectionism as trade unions have taken sides in the new war between the states caused by the flight of jobs to the Sunbelt. One of the great dangers of the Kirkland-Rohatyn reindustrialization panacea—cancelling any of the benefits of the AFL-CIO's recent halfhearted organizing campaigns in Texas and the South—18 that it will even further exacerbate sectional tensions which, more often than not, barely veil racial and ethnic antagonism. In an economy based on segmented labour markets, the unions' alternative to organizing, and thus upgrading, secondary labour market jobs is to attempt to raise new barriers to any mobility between primary and secondary sectors. A Maginot-like defense of existing employment structures dovetails only too neatly with the narrow instints of many unions; and already lurking on the perimeter of rightwing trade-union consciousness is the idea of a major campaign to restrict the growth and mobility of the burgeoning Hispanic labourforce. The cardinal criteria of trade-union strategy and tactics in the

eighties must be whether they aim to retrench the position of one segment of workers or to open out towards new solidarity and organizational unity. The struggle within the unions now, more than ever, arbitrates whether the us working class will become even more splintered or discover the basis of common action and identity.

In a sense, then, there is a real race between the innovation taking place in labour's grassroots and the leadership attempts to find a way out of the crisis without changing the bureaucratic, non-democratic and exclusivist structures of the American labour movement. For the time being, Kirkland is claiming to lead the unions to a new promised land; more than likely he is just as lost in Sinai, retracing the same old steps, as his immediate predecessor.

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The Death of the 'Chief Ideologue'

Many Soviet politicians have attracted the attention of the world's press over the last ten years but very little has been said or written about Mikhail Suslov. He kept himself to the shadows, shunning all publicity. He served neither as a minister nor as Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers; he avoided all the top government posts. Almost all his working life was spent in the party apparatus. He was an out-and-out apparatchik, like Malenkov only more skilful. He made his way up the party hierarchy more slowly than everyone else. At thirty-three Molotov had reached the Secretariat of the Russian Communist Party, as had Kaganovich. At the same age Mikoyan was a People's Commissar and a candidate member of the Politburo, and Malenkov headed one of the most important sections of the All-Union Communist Party. Suslov, when he was thirty-three, was just a rank-and-file inspector working for the Central Control Commission. And yet, at the end of his eighty-year life-span, he had become more than a modest old-age pensioner or honorary member of the Central Committee—he was a man who wielded enormous power, occupying

second place in the party hierarchy. This is why his recent death has been the subject of so much comment, speculation and prediction.

For the last seventeen years of his life Mikhail Suslov was considered the chief ideologue of the party. Ideology in the ussa is not simply a matter of propaganda and agitation or a branch of sociology: it is a vital instrument of power. No one can assume an important post anywhere in Soviet society or government without adhering to party ideology, which means Marxism-Leninism. The principles of Marxism-Leninism are compulsory subjects in every one of our secondary schools and throughout our tertiary education system: The conferment of any degree, in physics, mathematics, astronomy, literature, law of anything else, requires a pass in Marxist philosophy. Until quite recently to be accused of deviation from Marxist ideology or, worse still; of arguing against it, meant risking more than one's career.

As the Politburo member responsible for ideology, Suslov stood at the top of a great pyramid with a mass of ideological institutions beneath him. In the Party Central Committee he directed such departments as ideology, agitation and propaganda, science, secondary and tertiary education and two foreign sections. He controlled political education in the Soviet Army, Central Committee information, the foreign travel commission and the organizations for youth and social affairs. The Ministry of Culture, the State Committee for Publishing Houses, the State Committee for the Cinema and the media organization Gostelradio all operated under his authority. The whole of the press, the censorship, TASS, CPSU contacts with other communist parties, even the ussa's foreign policy—all of this lay under his jurisdiction. Naturally he worked closely with the KGB and the office of the State Prosecutor, with particular reference to that rather vague concept, 'ideological deviation'. He was kept especially busy by the dissident movement which evolved during the sixties and seventies. The system of party education, Znaniye publishing, the preparation of school text-books, the training of party personnel, the relations between the Soviet state and various religions and church organizations—these are just a few more of the problems which came within the purview of Mikhail Suslov.

One particular concern of his was to organize regular anniversary celebrations. Fifty, then sixty years of Soviet power, the fiftieth anniversary of the user, the centenary of Lenin's birth, the 110-year celebrations—the list is endless. In 1949 he was one of the chief organizers of the triumphant marking of Stalin's seventieth birthday, and in 1964 he performed a similar service for Nikita Khrushchev. In 1976 and 1981 he was the chief organizer of Leonid Brezhnev's seventieth and seventy-fifth birthday celebrations. Suslov himself was a modest man, both personally and in his social life. But he had the knack, when necessary, of indulging the vanity of other people. Many of these anniversary campaigns were conducted with such egregious crudity and accompanied by so much gross flattery that intelligent people used to wonder what he was trying to do: enhance or undermine the authority of the exalted party leaders.

One of the main slogans adopted during the last fifteen years has been 'stability'. Stability in policy, leadership and ideology. This has proved,

however, to be of a period of great change in both domestic and foreign policy and in the leadership structure. Of the party Presidium which met in October 1964 to discuss the deposition of Krushchev, only three members survived in 1981 as Politburo members: Brezhnev, Kirilenko and Suslov. Most members of the former Presidium were removed from office. Only a minority lie interred beside the Kremlin wall; Suslov's remains have now been laid to rest with them. Many members of the party apparatus have come to look upon this man as an 'Imperior griss', because of the scale of the power he wielded and the often carefully concealed means by which his influence was imposed. A proper concise biography of such a person is a difficult thing to write; we shall offer here only a few extracts from the life of Mikhail Suslov.

The Rise of Stalin's Emissary

Virtually nothing is known about the first thirty years of Suslov's life. The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia, the Historical Encyclopaedia and the obituaries written to mark his death are characterized by the repetition of similar expressions and a similar absence of material relating to this period.

Mikhail Andreyevich Suslov was born on 21 November 1902 in the village of Shakhovskove in the Khvalynsk district of the Saratov province (now the Pavlovsk region of the Ulyanov province). No one knows whether the young Suslov, who was born into the poorer peasantry, ever went to school. We do know that his mother died as recently as the early 1970s at the age of ninety, finishing her days in Moscow near to her son. At sixteen Suslov joined the Komsomol (Young Communist League) and became an active member of the local organization. In 1918 he worked for the Poverty Relief Committee established in his village. He joined the Party in 1921, aged 19. Dispatched officially to Moscow by his local party organization, he enrolled in the Prechistensky, Workers' Faculty, graduating in 1924. He became a postgraduate student in the Plekhanov Institute of Economy and then proceeded further to the Economic Institute of Red Professors which specialized in training corps of 'red' instructors, the new intelligentsia. Both of these institutions were well staffed and it is safe to assume that Suslov received a sound education in economics. Economics and politics, more specifically the economics of the transitional period, were the main talking-points within the party in the 1920s. It is clearly established that Suslov worked actively to oppose both 'leftist' and 'rightist' oppositions. Soon the young 'red professor' was lecturing in political economy at Moscow University and the Industrial Academy. Nikita Khrushchev studied at the latter in 1929-30. Relations between the lecturing staff and students coming up with experience as active workers were quite different from staff-student relations today. Khrushchev was, in any case, elected secretary of the party organization within the Academy. Thus we may deduce with certainty that it was here that Suslov first came to know Nikita Khrushchev.

In 1931 he abandoned teaching in favour of the party apparatus. He became an inspector on the Central Control Commission of the All-Union CP and on the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and

Peasants' Inspectorate. His main task here was to adjudicate on large numbers of 'personal cases', i.e. breaches of discipline and appeals against expulsion from the party. He did his work well. In 1933–4 Suslov directed a commission charged with purging the party in the Ural and Chernigov provinces. The purge was organized at All-Union level by Kaganovich who was head of the Central Control Commission in the early 1930s and who never failed to take note of a conscientious worker in his commission.

Suslov's role in the repressive campaigns of 1937 and 1938 is undocumented though it is clear that these campaigns, which wiped out most of the corpus of party activists, opened up the possibility of his swift advancement. In 1931, for instance, the leadership of the Rostov provincial committee was 'liquidated' almost in its entirety and it was Suslov who was sent to that province as head of a committee section. Vicious repressions continued but Suslov was not touched by them; he became a committee secretary. Arrests were occurring on such a massive scale in that province that in manywork places there were no party organs at all. The party organization was engaged in a blood-letting. Suslov supervised the examination of appeals from party members who had been expelled rather than arrested and he also arranged the swift recruitment of more than three thousand new members. The party organization in the extensive Stavropol province was also involved in a blood-letting by repression. In 1939 Suslov was transferred there as first secretary of the provincial committee and a vital stage in his career had begun. Suslov attended the 18th Party Congress as representative of the Stavropol region. Although he did not speak he was elected to serve on the Central Auditing Commission. Two years later, at the 18th Party Conference he was elected to the CP Central Committee, another vital stage in his party Career.

War came to the Stavropol region in 1942. In the course of their summer offensive German forces took Rostov-on-Don and began a swift advance into the North Caucasus. The retreat was so rapid that in some areas sections of the Red Army were moving east several days before the arrival of the German divisions. The German attack was arrested only in the region of Ordzhonokidze, a day or two's march from the town of Grozny. The German occupation was to last no more than a year, during which the regional party committee saw as its main task the organizing of a guerrilla movement. Suslov became Chief of Staff of the Stavropol partisan forces. Throughout the military activity in the North Caucasus he served as a member of the Military Council of the North Caucasian Front. During the war and the occupation a small section of the local inhabitants in the Stavropol region supported Hitler's administration. The 'Karachay National Committee' was set up in the town of Mikoyan-Shakhare, though most of the Karachay population supported the partisans in preference to it. None the less, soon after the liberation of that region in November 1943, every last inhabitant of that 70,000-strong Karachay district was exiled; the whole population left their homesteads and were transported by rail to 'special settlements' in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. The Karachay Autonomous Province was abolished. Naturally, the decision to exile the Muslim nationalities from the North Caucasus and the Volga region was taken by the State Defence

Committee in Moscow. Nevertheless this decision was fully supported by Stavropol regional party committee, which also saw to its enactment.

Suslov was given a new assignment in late 1944 when he became chairman of the Party Central Committee Bureau for Lithuania, a republic only recently liberated from the Germans where things were not going well because a large section of the population was opposed to 'Sovietization'. Following the German withdrawal the strong opposition to the new authority escalated into a prolonged and bloody guerrilla war. It was, in point of fact, a real civil war with one part of the Lithuanian population supporting the Red Army and the other resisting it with armed force. The partisan force, or 'forest brotherhood', was a strange mixture, including some who had collaborated with the occupying force, the wealthier peasantry and children of the Lithuanian bourgeoisie, but also a fair number of ordinary Lithuanian people who stood for the complete independence of their country. The battle was hard and much blood was shed. While it was in progress large numbers of the population were simply deported to Siberia. Middle-class people and other 'aliens', members of the old Lithuanian administration and nationalist leaders, were removed from the cities. Any peasants accused of giving aid to the 'forest brotherhood' were deported from the countryside. It took two whole years of military activity to eliminate the guerrilla movement, and the whole battle, which was accompanied on both sides by vicious cruelty and mass violence, has left an indelible mark on the consciousness of the Lithuanian nation. Suslov was Stalin's emissary in that republic, invested with full power, and the memory of him there is not a happy one.

The Central Committee's Eminance Grise

It is clear that Stalin was well pleased with Suslov and his achievements. In 1947 Suslov was transferred to Moscow and at a plenary session he was elected to the Central Committee of the Party as one of its secretaries. The Secretariat then included also Zhdanov, Kuznetsov, Malenkov, Popov and Stalin himself. Suslov enjoyed the full confidence of Stalin and in 1948 he was entrusted with the task of speaking on behalf of the Central Committee to a solemn meeting called to mark the twenty-fourth anniversary of Lenin's death. In the period 1949—30 he worked as editor-in-chief of *Prasds* and rose to become an elected member of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Also in 1949 he represented the confidence of the Central Committee at the Cominform Conference in Budapest, using the occasion to denounce the Yugoslav Communist Party in an address.

During this period Suslov concerned himself primarily with ideological problems, though it goes without saying that his role as an actual 'ideologue' was without significance, being subordinate to that of the chief, indeed the only party 'ideologue' or 'theoretician', Stalin himself. Some years later, addressing the 20th Party Congress, Suslov referred to the abnormal situation of ideology during the cult of Stalin. 'There can be no doubt', he claimed, 'that the personality cult contributed strongly to the spread of opinionated dogmatism. Supporters of the personality cult ascribed the development of Marxist theory only to certain personalities and relied entirely upon them. All other mortals seemingly had nothing to do but absorb and popularise what was created by these personalities.

Thus the role of collective thinking in our party, the role of fraternal parties in the development of revolutionary theory and the role of the collective experience of the mass of the people all came to be ignored.' On the other hand we have no difficulty in recognizing that Suslov, as the ideological leader of the party, was raised and formed in the Stalin period; the imprint of dogmatism and the fear of independence and originality remained upon him for the rest of his days. Suslov's first endeavour, from his earliest pronouncements on ideology, was to eliminate all ideological error, in other words to avoid any contradition of what was laid down in political terms by established directive. He was well aware that mediocre compromise and greyness in his ideological pronouncements would cause no trouble whereas a single 'ideological error' could terminate the whole of his political career.

At the 19th Party Congress Suslov was invited by Stalin to join an augmented CP Central Committee Presidium, though on this occasion his appointment was to last only for a few months. Immediately after Stalin's death the Presidium was reduce in size and Suslov disappeared from it. Even so, in the immediate post-Stalin period he retained his position on the CP Central Committee Secretariat.

Nikita Khrushchev—a man of exceptional energy, the enemy of all dogmatism, with a liking for change and reform—was the exact opposite of the cautious, reserved Suslov. During his administration Khrushchev was his own chief ideologue, as well as being his own foreign secretary, and he had direct personal dealings with the heads of other communist parties. However, he still had need of a Politburo member who could run the day-to-day activities of the many institutions connected with ideology. He settled on Suslov and had him elected to the Presidium in 1955. Very little in Khrushchev's way of doing things could have appealed to Suslov; though when it came to the bitter struggle soon to be waged in the upper strata of the Party between Khrushchev and the 'anti-Party' group, Suslov proved a staunch Khrushchev supporter. He took his side at the 20th Party Congress and in the many arguments which occurred in the party Presidium during 1956-7. He was still a Khrushchev man in June 1917 when, at the Plenary Session which was to be so decisive for Khrushchev, he made a speech outlining for the membership of the Central Committee the nature of the dissension arising in the Presidium. He was followed on this occasion by Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Shepilov and Bulganin, all of whom laid charges at Khrushchev's door, refused to recant and mounted a persistent self-defence, thus prolonging the session by several days. At every stage of this encounter Suslov stood out for Khrushchev.

However, by the late fifties and early sixties Suslov himself began to advance cautious criticism of many aspects of Khrushchev's domestic and foreign policies. He wanted no further exposure of Stalin. He insisted on banning discussion of the anti-party group at the 21st and 22nd Party Congresses. Khrushchev acted on his own initiative in this case and, in any event, was now turning to Ilichov or Mikoyan for assistance in solving problems of ideology. He had no 'chief ideologue'.

In the first phase of the conflict with China, when the differences were

largely ideological, Suslov was the chief opponent of Liu Shao-Tsi, Deng Xiao Peng and even Mao Tse-Tung. All letters from the CP Central Committee to the Chinese Communist Party were edited by him, and it was he who gave the main address at the 1964 Central Committee plenary session dealing with the Sino-Soviet conflict.

It seems probable that in the spring of 1964 Suslov initiated confidential discussions with other members of the Presidium and certain influential Central Committee members about the possibility of deposing Khrushchev. His closest ally in this matter was Alexander Shelepin, a relatively recent promotion to the Presidium and still head of the security organs. In the autumn of that year Suslov and Shelepin were the chief organizers of the October plenary session. After this meeting at which the decision was taken to depose Khrushchev it fell to Suslov to address the full Central Committee and he lost no opportunity to enumerate Khrushchev's transgressions and errors.

After the enforced retirement of Khrushchev, the party leaders, not for the first time, announced the necessity for a 'collective leadership' and the unacceptability of any new 'personality cult'. Leonid Brezhnev became the First (then, in 1966, General) Secretary of the Party Central Committee though he did not yet enjoy the power and influence that would be his in the 1970s. Almost as much influence in the state and party apparatus belonged to Suslov and Shelepin who were now themselves engaged in backstage rivalry for primacy within the party. By late 1965 Shelepin, known as 'Iron Shurik', seemed to be coming out on top. Many of his personal friends were boasting that he was about to become First Secretary. However, Suslov was the more experienced man and he managed to oust Shelepin who then became not the first but the third Central Committee Secretary. He also arranged the removal of Ilichov from the Secretariat and his replacement by Demichev, a chemical and light industry specialist who may have met the requirements of a first secretary of the Moscow City Party Committee but who was to prove feeble, incompetent and lacking in initiative when it came to handling the ideological section of the CP Central Committee. He was no match for Suslov and many observers at the 23rd Party Congress, in the spring of 1966, noted that Suslov was clearly the chief stage-manager of that occasion.

Another of Suslov's rivals in the Central Committee was Brezhnev's protégé, Trapeznikov, who had been put in charge of science, schools and tertiary education. As well as this critically important section Trapeznikov was given the task of rehabilitating Stalin, a process which went on with gathering intensity throughout 1965 and 1966. Suslov held the view that such rehabilitation was neither expedient nor timely and he therefore withheld support from Trapeznikov and his kind, doing his best to halt their swift progress. In 1967 Suslov insisted on the removal of the KGB minister, Semichastnyy, a close friend of Shelepin; the pretext for this was the defection of Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, to the United States and the failure of the KGB to get her back. Yuriy Andropov, a man who had previously worked under Suslov as head of one of the international sections of the Central Committee, replaced Semichastnyy as head of the KGB.

Suslov was deeply disturbed by the events in Czechoslovakia in 1967–68. During the Hungarian uprising, along with Mikoyan, Zhukov and Andropov, he had remained in close proximity with Budapest in order to direct the activities of the Soviet troops and lend assistance to the new Hungarian leadership. Now Suslov believed that much the same circumstances had arisen in Czechoslovakia. There can be little doubt that when it came to a vote in the Politburo Suslov was in favour of sending in the Warsaw Pact forces.

No one can tell whether Suslov believed he might one day become party leader. In the event, Brezhnev's increasingly firm hold on power and the extension of his personal apparatus for retaining it, together with his independent way of doing things and making pronouncements—all of this greatly annoyed Suslov. In late 1969 at a plenary session of the Central Committee Brezhnev made a speech sharply criticizing many deficiencies in the national economy. The speech had been prepared by Brezhnev's own assistants and advisers and it had not been cleared at Politburo level. This did not amount to a breach of the traditional 'collective leadership' since Brezhnev was not a main speaker-his address was given in the course of the subsequent debate. Nevertheless it was taken as gospel. Once the session was over Suslov, Shelepin and Mazurov sent a letter to the Central Committee criticizing some of the ideas contained in Brezhnev's speech. The resulting difference of opinion was scheduled for debate at the spring meeting of the Central Committee but this did not happen. Brezhnev gained the support of the more influential members of the Central Committee and the objections of Susloy, Shelepin and Mazurov were withdrawn. Shelepin did continue to criticize Brezhnev on a number of counts, hoping to broaden his own influence within the leadership, but he was soon demoted to the position of trade-union leader and then dismissed from the Politburo. Suslov, while preserving a measure of independence, abandoned any further pretensions, satisfied with second place in the party hierarchy and the role of 'chief ideologue'.

Ideology in the 1970s: Going Backwards

The entire ideological life of our country and party in the 1970s was under the control of Suslov and his ideological apparatus. Naturally those who wish to do so may point to a number of advances in various spheres of sciences and culture during those years. All in all, however, this was a period not so much of progress as regression, for which Suslov's leadership was largely responsible. The sixties had been a decade of far-reaching initiatives in all aspects of culture, art and the social sciences but most of these remained unfulfilled. By the late 1960s they had faded to a flicker and now they pretty well died out. For the intelligentsia, for all those people engaged in creating the country's culture, it was a bad decade. Suslov himself made not a single new contribution to party theory or ideology. His creative potential proved to be inconsequential to a remarkable degree.

Suslov's ability as an experienced apparatchik is not in question—he passed skilfully along the corridors of power, always retaining vital contacts in military circles and those of the KGB. He never failed to

maintain friendly relations with certain well known representatives of the creative intelligentsia—though not the best of them. One of his friends was, for instance, the sculptor, Vuchetich. Suslov always behaved with personal modesty, sometimes almost asceticism. He had no taste for luxurious dachas or fine parties; he never drank to excess. He took no special pains to secure the careers of his children, none of whom has ever occupied a prominent position. He never sought an academic title like Ilichov or the title of corresponding member of an academy like Trapeznikov. Quite the reverse, he pushed through the Politburo a resolution debarring workers occupying prominent positions in the party apparatus from applying for any sort of academic title. All of this amounts without doubt to a laudable quality in the ideological leader of the party. We must also acknowledge that Suslov had a good grasp of the theory of Marxism and Leninism: he knew his classical texts. This may well have been sufficient for a sound teacher of social science, but it was desperately insufficient for the 'chief ideologue' of the party.

Although Suslov's obituary writers describe him as a 'major party theoretician' his actual contribution to party theory was nil; he never said an original word on the entire subject. In thirty-five years of activity in various responsible party positions Suslov wrote not a single book and his 'complete works' fit into two rather slender volumes. And what sort of works are they? Reading them one after the other is an intolerably tedious business—the same phrasing, the same tired ideological clichés reappear in speech after speech, article after article. He seems to make a point of avoiding all bright ideas or striking images, he has no taste for levity and certainly his speeches are never punctuated by comments such as 'laughter', 'loud laughter' or 'movement throughout the hall'. What do we actually encounter in his two-volume Complete Works' as issued in 1977 with a pamphlet appendix published in 1980?

Suslov's speeches as secretary of the regional committees in Rostov and Stavropol are the usual speeches made by your run-of-the-mill regional committee man. They describe the tasks of the Youth League in the education of young people, the tasks of a people's teacher in bringing the light of knowledge to the masses, the need for careful, seasonal tilling of the soil, the necessity of doing one's very best for the front-line and of fighting bravely when in that position. But when he becomes a responsible Central Committee member Suslov produces nothing of greater depth or consequence. A good couple of dozen speeches were made by this man when awarding orders of merit to various Soviet regions and cities—the regions of Saratov, Chemovtsy, Pavlodar, Ulyanovsk, Leningrad, Novosibirsk, Tambov; the cities of Odessa, Bryansk, Stavropol, and others. They are the sort of speeches normally supplied for any speaker by writers within the party apparatus and advisers from the relevant regional committee. A large number of similarly prefabricated party addresses were given by Suslov to congresses of foreign communist parties, the French, Italian, Vietnamese, Indian, Cuban, Mongolian, Bulgarian, Polish, and others. Originality finds no place either in the traditional speeches made by Suslov, as a Politburo member, at election meetings in the various constituencies which voted him on to the Supreme Soviet. A significant proportion of Suslov's 'artistic legacy' consists of anniversary speeches—marking the

death or birth of Lenin, the October Revolution, seventy years since the 2nd Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party and the 7th Congress of Comintern, 150 years since the birth of Karl Marx or the fiftieth anniversary of the USSR itself. Whenever the main address on some such special occasion was delivered by Leonid Brezhnev, Suslov would follow it up by publishing an article on the same theme in the journal Komminust. The steady flow of reports given by him at All-Union meetings of ideological workers or teachers of social discipline similarly contains very little of interest—they tended to avoid anything contentious or even topical. To make matters worse Suslov took great care over editing his speeches and articles for republication, removing every last word of praise or censure directed at Stalin or Khrushchev and omitting any awkward examples, such as the criminal activities of Molotov.

It comes as no surprise to learn that there is not much demand in the bookshops for Suslov's collected speeches and articles. The first edition of 100,000 copies had not sold out more than two years after publication even though it was on sale in every street-comer kiosk. For our country this is quite a small edition; the USSR has at least a million workers professionally engaged in problems of ideology and sociology. We must assume that the second edition, of a further 100,000 has not been printed. The little appendix of Suslov's collected speeches and articles for the period 1977—80 was published at the give-away price of thirty kopecks and in an edition of fifty thousand copies, ludicrously small for a political pamphlet; it has sold mainly to libraries and party offices. It seems likely that a mere twenty or thirty thousand teachers and propaganda-specialists have spent the two roubles necessary to acquire the three Suslov volumes for their own personal libraries. This is, to say the least, a disappointing product of so many years' activity on the part of our 'chief ideologue'.

Mikhail Suslov was not a man of robust health. In his youth he suffered from tuberculosis and in later years he became a diabetic. In 1976 he had a heart attack. He could no longer work properly and was limited by his doctors to a three or four-hour day. When travelling back to the Kremlin from his country dacha he would never let his driver go faster than 30 mph. whereas most government cars and any escorting vehicles usually go up to twice that speed down the specially reserved fast lanes. Whenever his heart was playing up, instead of going home he would stay overnight in a private ward of a government hospital.

In recent years Suslov formed a close relationship with the artist Glazunov, a 'Russianist' who represented a social movement of Russian nationalism. After a long time spent out of favour, Glazunov was given permission for a massive personal exhibition in the Manège, a great honour for any Soviet artist. But this did not mean that the Russian nationalists could now count on Suslov's support. Glazunov painted Suslov's portrait and Suslov liked what he saw, but his dogmatic spirit held him back from any alliance with as colourful a group as these nationalists, though they have had some support in the upper strata of Soviet society. As for Suslov, it was he who arranged a special debate at Politburo level in 1970 which condemned nationalist tendencies in the journal Molodaya Gvardiya and resolved to replace its editorial board. Another example of his dogmatism was his refusal to allow the Moscow

Arts Theatre to perform Shatrov's play 'This is How We Shall Win' because it dealt with the last months before Lenin's death.

The stormy events occurring in Poland demanded a level of concentration and study which was now beyond Suslov's capabilities. He was an old man suffering from hardening of the arteries in the heart and brain. He was under doctor's orders not only to work very little, but to avoid stress. But no one can occupy such an exalted position as Suslov's without stress, without conflict and without hearing bad news. After a conversation which seemed gentle enough but nevertheless touched on a tricky subject Suslov experienced a sudden rise in blood pressure and suffered a severe stroke. He lost consciousness and died a few days later.

The death of Mikhail Suslov has been the subject of much speculation and prediction but it is true to say that very few people have felt any real grief or regret as they walked past his coffin in the Column Hall of the House of Unions or watched his state funeral on television. The little cemetery by the Kremlin wall has very few vacant plots left but a place has been found for Suslov right next to Stalin's grave.

Translated by A.D.P. Briggs

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The Dialectic of Fear

The fear of bourgeois civilization is summed up in two names: Frankenstein and Dracula.* The monster and the vampire are born together one night in 1816 in the drawing room of the Villa Chapuis near Geneva, out of a society game among friends to while away a rainy summer. Born in the full spate of the industrial revolution, they rise again together in the critical years at the end of the nineteenth century under the names of Hyde and Dracula. In the twentieth century they conquer the cinema: after the First World War, in German Expressionism; after the 1929 crisis, with the big RKO productions in America; then in 1956–57, Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, directed by Terence Fisher, again, triumphantly, incarnate this twin-faced nightmare. Frankenstein and Dracula lead parallel lives. They are indivisible, because complementary, figures; the two horrible faces of a single society, its extremes: the disfigured wretch and the ruthless proprietor. The worker and capital: 'the whole of society must split into the two classes of property owners and propertyless workers.' That 'must', which for Marx is a scientific prediction of the future (and

the guarantee of a future reordering of society), is a forewarning of the end for nineteenth-century bourgeois culture.

I. Towards a Sociology of the Modern Monster

The literature of terror is born precisely out of the terror of a split society and out of the desire to heal it. It is for just this reason that Dracula and Frankenstein, with rare exceptions, do not appear together. The threat would be too great, and this literature, having produced terror, must also erase it and restore peace. It must restore the broken equilibrium—giving the illusion of being able to stop history—because the monster expresses the anxiety that the future will be monstrous. His antagonist—the enemy of the monster—will always be, by contrast, a representative of the present, a distillation of complacent nineteenth-century mediocrity: nationalistic, stupid, superstitious, philistine, impotent, self-satisfied. But this does not show through. Fascinated by the horror of the monster, the public accepts the vices of its destroyer without a murmur, just as it accepts his literary depiction, the jaded and repetitive typology which regains its strength and its virginity on contact with the unknown. The monster, then, serves to displace the antagonisms and horrors evidenced within society to outside society itself. In Franksustein the struggle will be between a 'race of devils' and the 'species of man'. Whoever dares to fight the monster automatically becomes the representative of the species, of the whole of society. The monster, the utterly unknown, serves to reconstruct a universality, a social cohesion which in itself would no longer carry conviction.

Frankenstein's monster and Dracula the vampire are, unlike previous monsters, dynamic, totalizing monsters. This is what makes them frightening. Before, things were different. Sade's malefactors agree to operate on the margins of society, hidden away in their towers. Justine is their victim because she rejects the modern world, the world of the city, of exchange, of her reduction to a commodity. She thus gives herself over to the old horror of the feudal world, the will of the individual master. Moreover, in Sade the evil has a 'natural' limit which cannot be overstepped: the gratification of the master's desire. Once he is satisfied, the torture ceases too. Dracula, on the other hand, is an ascetic of terror: in him is celebrated the victory of the desire for possession over that of enjoyment, and possession as such, indifferent to consumption, is by its very nature insatiable and unlimited. Polidori's vampire is still a petty feudal lord forced to travel round Europe strangling young ladies for the miserable purpose of surviving. Time is against him, against his conservative desires. Stoker's Dracula, by contrast, is a rational entrepreneur who invests his gold to expand his dominion: to conquer the City of London. And already Frankenstein's monster sows devastation over the whole world, from the Alps to Scotland, from Eastern Europe to the Pole. By comparison, the gigantic ghost of The Castle of Otranto looks like a dwarf. He is confined to a single place; he can appear once only; he is merely a relic of the past. Once order is reestablished he is silent for ever. The modern monsters, however, threaten to live for ever and to conquer the world. For this reason they must be killed.

^{*} From Signs Taken for Wonders, NLB/verso 1983 (forthcoming)—footnotes deleted.

Frankenstein

Like the proletariat, the monster is denied a name and an individuality. He is the Frankenstein monster; he belongs wholly to his creator (just as one can speak of 'a Ford worker'). Like the proletariat, he is a collective and artifical creature. He is not found in nature, but built. Frankenstein is a productive inventor-scientist, in open conflict with Walton, the contemplative discoverer-scientist (the pattern is repeated with Jekyll and Lanyon). Reunited and brought back to life in the monster are the limbs of those—the 'poor'—whom the breakdown of feudal relations has forced into brigandage, poverty and death. Only modern science—this metaphor for the 'dark satanic mills'—can offer them a future. It sews them together again, moulds them according to its will and finally gives them life. But at the moment the monster opens its eyes, its creator draws back in horror: 'by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; . . . How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe . . .?'

Between Frankenstein and the monster there is an ambivalent, dialectical relationship, the same as that which, according to Marx, connects capital with wage-labour. On the one hand, the scientist cannot but create the monster: 'often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion.' On the other hand, he is immediately afraid of it and wants to kill it, because he realizes he has given life to a creature stronger than himself and of which he cannot henceforth be free. It is the same curse that afflicts Jekyll: 'to put your good heart at rest, I will tell you one thing: the moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr Hyde.' And yet it is Hyde who will become master of his master's life. The fear aroused by the monster, in other words, is the fear of one who is afraid of having 'produced his own gravediggers'.

A 'Race of Devils'

The monster's explicit 'demands' cannot in fact produce fear. They are not a gesture of challenge; they are 'reformist' demands. The monster wishes only to have rights of citizenship among men: I will not be tempted to set myself in opposition to thee. I am thy creature, and I will be ever mild and docile to my natural lord and king, . . . I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous.' Furthermore, when all kindly relations with humans have failed, the monster humbly accepts his marginalization, begging only to have another creature who is 'as deformed and horrible as myself'. But even this is denied him. The monster's sheer existence is frightening enough for Frankenstein, let alone the prospect of his producing children and multiplying. Frankenstein—who never manages to consummate his marriage—is the victim of the same impotence that Benjamin describes: 'Social reasons for impotence: the imagination of the bourgeois class stopped caring about the future of the productive forces it had unleashed ... Male impotence—key figure of solitude, in it the arrest of the productive forces is effected'. The possibility of the monster having descendants presents itself to the scientist as a real nightmare: 'a race of

devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror.'

'Race of devils': this image of the proletariat encapsulates one of the most reactionary elements in Mary Shelley's ideology. The monster is a historical product, an artificial being: but once transformed into a 'race' he re-enters the immutable realm of Nature. He can become the object of an instinctive, elemental hatred; and 'men' need this hatred to counterbalance the force unleashed by the monster. So true is this that racial discrimination is not superimposed on the development of the narrative but springs directly from it: it is not only Mary Shelley who wants to make the monster a creature of another race, but Frankenstein himself. Frankenstein does not in fact want to create a man (as he claims) but a monster, a race. He narrates at length the 'infinite pains and care' with which he had endeavoured to form the creature; he tells us that 'his limbs were in proportion' and that he had 'selected his features as beautiful.' So many lies in the same paragraph, three words later, we read: 'His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, ... his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.' Even before he begins to live, this new being is already monstrous, already a race apart. He must be so, he is made to be so—he is created but on these conditions. There is here a clear lament for the feudal sumptuary laws which, by imposing a particular style of dress on each social rank, allowed it to be recognized at a distance and nailed it physically to its social role. Now that clothes have become commodities that anyone can buy, this is no longer possible. Difference in rank must now be inscribed more deeply: in one's skin, one's eyes, one's build. The monster makes us realize how hard it was for the dominant classes to resign themselves to the idea that all human beings are—or ought to be—equal.

But the monster also makes us realize that in an unequal society they are not equal. Not because they belong to different 'races' but because inequality really does score itself into one's skin, one's eyes and one's body. And more so, evidently, in the case of the first industrial workers: the monster is disfigured not only because Frankenstein wants him to be like that, but also because this was how things actually were in the first decades of the industrial revolution. In him, the metaphors of the critics of civil society become real. The monster incarnates the dialectic of estranged labour described by the young Marx: 'the more his product is shaped, the more misshapen the worker; the more civilized his object, the more barbarous the worker; the more powerful the work, the more powerless the worker, the more intelligent the work, the duller the worker and the more he becomes a slave of nature. . . . It is true that labour produces . . . palaces, but hovels for the worker. . . . It produces intelligence, but it produces idiocy and cretinism for the worker.' Frankenstein's invention is thus a pregnant metaphor of the process of capitalist production, which forms by deforming, civilizes by barbarizing, enriches by impoverishing—2 two-sided process in which each affirmation entails a negation. And indeed the monster—the pedestal on which Frankenstein erects his anguished greatness—is always described by negation: man is well proportioned, the monster is not, man is beautiful,

the monster ugly; man is good, the monster evil. The monster is man turned upside-down, negated. He has no autonomous existence; he can never be really free or have a future. He lives only as the other side of that coin which is Frankenstein. When the scientist dies, the monster does not know what to do with his own life and commits suicide.

Mary Shelley's Bad Dream

The two extremes of Frankenstein are the scientist and the monster. But it is more precise to say that they become extremes in the course of the narration. Mary Shelley's novel rests in fact on an elementary scheme, that of simplification and splitting ('The whole of society must split into the two classes. . .'). It is a process that demands its victims, and indeed, all the 'intermediate' characters perish one after the other by the monster's hand: Frankenstein's brother William, the maid Justine, his friend Clerval, his wife Elizabeth, his father. This is a sequence echoed in the sacrifice of Philemon and Baucis, as Faust's entrepreneurial dream dictates the destruction, in the figures of the two old people, of the family unit and small independent property. In Frankenstein too, the victims of the monster (or rather of the struggle between the monster and the scientist, a struggle which prefigures the social relations of the future) are those who still represent the ethical and economic ideal of the family as an 'extended' unit: not just the relatives, but also the maid and and the fraternal friend Clerval. Clerval, in comparison with his contemporary, Victor, is still placidly traditionalist: he, unlike Frankenstein, has chosen to stay in his parents' town, in his family home, and to keep their values alive. These values are corporative, localistic, unchanging: the ethic of the 'common road' praised by Robinson Crusoe's father. Frankenstein himself ends up being converted to them, but by then it is too late: 'how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow. . . . Farewell, Walton! Seek happiness in tranquility and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries."

Frankenstein's last words reconnect with Mary Shelley's preface, which gives the aim of the work as 'the exhibition of the amuableness of domestic affection'. Nor is it by accident that his words are spoken to Walton, since Walton is essential for the communication of the work's message. Like Frankenstein, Walton starts out as the protagonist of a desperate undertaking, spurred on by an imperious as well as aggressive and inhuman idea of scientific progress: 'One man's life or death were but a small price to pay for the acquirement of the knowledge which I sought'. But Frankenstein's story puts him off. At the end, Walton accedes to the protestations of the sailors, who are frightened for their lives, and agrees to come back 'ignorant and disappointed' to his homeland and his family. Thanks to his conversion, Walton survives. And this confers on him a dominant function in the narrative structure, in the book's system of 'senders' of messages. Walton both begins the story and ends it. His narrative 'contains', and thus subordinates, Frankenstein's narrative (which in turn 'contains' that of the monster). The broadest, most comprehensive, most universal narrative viewpoint is reserved for Walton. The narrative system inverts the meaning of Frankenstein as we

have described it, exorcising its horror. The dominant element of reality is not the splitting of society into two opposing poles, but its symbolic reunification in the Walton family. The wound is healed: one goes back home.

The universality attributed to Walton by the system of narrative senders applies not only to the story at hand but to the whole course of history. Through Walton, Frankenstein and the monster are relegated to the status of mere historical 'accidents'; theirs is only an episode, a 'case' (Stevenson's title will be The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde). By this means Mary Shelley wants to convince us that capitalism has no future. it may have been around for a few years, but now it is all over. Anyone can see that Frankenstein and the monster die without heirs, while Robert Walton survives. It is a glaring anachronism, but one for which Mary Shelley has prepared us. The sociological fulcrum of Frankenstein—the creation of the proletariat—responds neither to economic interests nor to objective needs. It is the product of a solitary, subjective and entirely disinterested piece of work: Frankenstein expects no personal advantage from creating the monster. Or rather, he cannot expect it, because in the world of the novel there is no way of utilizing the monster. And there is no way of utilizing him because there are no factories. And there are no factories for two very good reasons: because for Mary Shelley the demands of production have no value in themselves, but must be subordinated to the maintenance of the moral and material solidity of the family; and because, as she understood, the factories would undoubtedly multiply the feared 'race of devils' to an infinite number. Wishing to exorcise the proletariat, Mary Shelley, with absolute logical consistency, erases capital from her picture too. In other words, she erases history.

And indeed, the end result of the peculiar narrative structure employed is to make the story of Frankenstein and the monster resemble a fable. As in a fable, the story proceeds in oral form: Frankenstein speaks to Walton, the monster to Frankenstein, Frankenstein to Walton again (whereas Walton, who embodies history and the future, writes). As in a fable, there is an attempt to create a cosy, trusting, domestic situation: even the monster, at the beginning of his narrative, suggests that he and Frankenstein take refuge in a mountain cottage so as to be more comfortable. As in a fable, by an iron law, what has happened must be considered an imaginary occurrence. Capitalism is a dream—a bad dream, but a dream nonetheless.

Dracula

Count Dracula is an anistocrat only in a manner of speaking. Jonathan Harker—the London estate agent who stays in his castle and whose diary opens Stoker's novel—observes with astonishment that Dracula lacks precisely what makes a man 'noble': servants. Dracula stoops to driving the carriage, cooking the meals, making the beds, cleaning the castle. The Count has read Adam Smith: he knows that servants are unproductive workers who diminish the income of the person who keeps them. Dracula also lacks the aristocrat's conspicuous consumption: he does not eat, he does not drink, he does not make love, he does not like showy clothes, he does not go to the theatre and he does not go hunting, he does

not hold receptions and does not build stately homes. Not even his violence has pleasure as its goal. Dracula (unlike Vlad the Impaler, the historical Dracula, and all other vampires before him) does not like spilling blood: he meds blood. He sucks just as much as is necessary and never wastes a drop. His ultimate aim is not to destroy the lives of others according to whim, to waste them, but to me them. Dracula, in other words, 18 a saver, an ascetic, an upholder of the Protestant ethic. And in fact he has no body—or rather, he has no shadow. His body admittedly exists, but it is 'incorporeal'—'sensibly supersensible' as Marx wrote of the commodity, 'impossible as a physical fact', as Mary Shelley defines the monster in the first lines of her preface. In fact it is impossible, 'physically', to estrange a man from himself, to de-humanize him. But alienated labour, as a social relation, makes it possible. So too there really exists a social product which has no body, which has exchange-value but no use-value. This product, we know, is money. And when Harker explores the castle, he finds just one thing: 'a great heap of gold . . . gold of all kinds, Roman, and British, and Austrian, and Hungarian, and Greek and Turkish money, covered with a film of dust, as though it had lain long in the ground.' The money that had been buried comes back to life, becomes capital and embarks on the conquest of the world: this and none other is the story of Dracula the vampire.

'Capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.' Marx's analogy unravels the vampire metaphor. As everyone knows, the vampire is dead and yet not dead: he is an Un-Dead, a 'dead' person who yet manages to live thanks to the blood he sucks from the living. Their strength becomes his strength. The stronger the vampire becomes, the weaker the living become: 'the capitalist gets rich, not, like the miser, in proportion to his personal labour and restricted consumption, but at the same rate as he squeezes out labour-power from others, and compels the worker to renounce all the enjoyments of life.' Like capital, Dracula is impelled towards a continuous growth, an unlimited expansion of his domain: accumulation is inherent in his nature. 'This', Harker exclaims, 'was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps for centuries to come, he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless.' 'And so the circle goes on ever widening', Van Helsing says later on; and Seward describes Dracula as 'the father or furtherer of a new order of beings'.

All Dracula's actions really have as their final goal the creation of this 'new order of beings' which finds its most fertile soil, logically enough, in England. And finally, just as the capitalist is 'capital personified' and must subordinate his private existence to the abstract and incessant movement of accumulation, so Dracula is not impelled by the desire for power but by the carre of power, by an obligation he cannot escape. 'When they (the Un-Dead) become such', Van Helsing explains, 'there comes with the change the curse of immortality; they cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world'. It is remarked later of the vampire that he 'can do all these things, yet he is not free'. His curse compels him to make ever more victims, just as the capitalist is compelled to accumulate. His nature forces him to struggle to

be unlimited, to subjugate the whole of society. For this reason, one cannot 'coexist' with the vampire. One must either succumb to him or kill him, thereby freeing the world of his presence and him of his curse. When the knife plunges into Dracula's heart, in the moment before his dissolution, 'there was in the face a look of peace, such as I would never have imagined might have rested there'. There flashes forth here the idea, to which we shall return, of the partification of capital.

The Vampire as Monopolist

If the vampire is a metaphor for capital, then Stoker's vampire, who is of 1897, must be the capital of 1897. The capital which, after lying 'buried' for twenty long years of recession, rises again to set out on the irreversible road of concentration and monopoly. And Dracula is a true monopolist: solitary and despotic, he will not brook competition. Like monopoly capital, his ambition is to subjugate the last vestiges of the liberal era and destroy all forms of economic independence. He no longer restricts himself to incorporating (in a literal sense) the physical and moral strength of his victims. He intends to make them his forever. Hence the horror, for the bourgeois mind. One is bound to Dracula, as to the devil, for life; no longer 'for a fixed period', as the classic bourgeois contract stipulated with the intention of maintaining the freedom of the contracting parties. The vampire, like monopoly, destroys the hope that one's independence can one day be bought back. He threatens the idea of individual liberty. For this reason the nineteenth-century bourgeois is able to imagine monopoly only in the guise of Count Dracula, the aristocrat, the figure of the past, the relic of distant lands and dark ages. Because the nineteenth-century bourgeois believes in free trade, and he knows that in order to become established, free competition had to destroy the tyranny of feudal monopoly. For him, then, monopoly and free competition are irreconcilable concepts. Monopoly is the past of competition, the middle ages. He cannot believe it can be its future, that competition itself can generate monopoly in new forms. And yet 'modern monopoly is . . . the true synthesis . . . the negation of feudal monopoly insofar as it implies the system of competition, and the negation of competition insofar as it is monopoly.'

Dracula is thus at once the final product of the bourgeois century and its negation. In Stoker's novel only this second aspect—the negative and destructive one-appears. There are very good reasons for this. In Britain at the end of the nineteenth century, monopolistic concentration was far less developed (for various economic and political reasons) than in the other advanced capitalist societies. Monopoly could thus be perceived as something extraneous to British history: as a foreign threat. This is why Dracula is not British, while his antagonists (with one exception, as we shall see, and with the addition of Van Helsing, born in that other classic homeland of free trade, Holland) are British through and through. Nationalism—the defence to the death of British civilization—has a central role in Dracula. The idea of the nation is central because it is collective: it coordinates individual energies and enables them to resist the threat. For while Dracula threatens the freedom of the individual, the latter alone lacks the power to resist or defeat him.

Indeed the followers of pure economic individualism, those who pursue only their own profit, are, without knowing it, the vampire's best allies. Individualism is not the weapon with which Dracula can be beaten. Other things are needed in effect, two: money and religion. These are considered as a single whole, which must not be separated: in other words, money at the service of religion and vice versa. The money of Dracula's enemies is money that refuses to become capital, that wants not to obey the profane economic laws of capitalism but to be used to do good. Towards the end of the novel. Mina Harker thinks of her friends' financial commitment: 'it made me think of the wonderful power of money! What can it not do when it is properly applied; and what might it do when basely used? This is the point: money should be used according to justice. Money must not have its end in itself, in its continuous accumulation. It must have, rather, a moral, anti-economic end, to the point where colossal expenditures and losses can be calmly accepted. This idea of money is, for the capitalist, something inadmissible. But it is also the great ideological lie of Victorian capitalism, a capitalism which is ashamed of itself and which hides factories and stations beneath cumbrous Gothic superstructures; which prolongs and extols aristocratic models of life; which exalts the holiness of the family as the latter begins secretly to break up.

Dracula's enemies are precisely the exponents of this capitalism. They are the militant version of Dickens's benefactors. They find their fulfilment in religious superstition, whereas the vampire is paralysed by it. And yet the crucifixes, holy wafers, garlic, magic flowers, and so on, are not important for their intrinsic religious meaning but for a subtler reason. Their true function consists in setting impassable limits to the vampire's activity. They prevent him from entering this or that house, conquering this or that person, carrying out this or that metamorphosis. But setting limits to the vampire-capital means attacking his very raison d'être: he must by his nature be able to expand without limit, to destroy every restraint upon his action. Religious superstition imposes the same limits on Dracula that Victorian capitalism declares itself to accept spontaneously. But Dracula—who is capital that is not ashamed of itself, true to its own nature, an end in itself—cannot survive in these conditions. And so this symbol of a cruel historical development falls victim to a handful of whited sepulchres, a bunch of fanatics who want to arrest the course of history. It is they who are the relics of the dark ages.

American Financiers and Other Crypto-Vampires

At the end of *Dracula* the vampire's defeat is complete. Dracula and his lovers are destroyed, Mina Harker is saved at the last moment. Only one cloud darkens the happy ending. In killing Dracula, Quincy P. Morris, the American who has been helping his British friends to save their nation, dies too, almost by accident. The occurrence seems inexplicable, extraneous to the logic of the narrative, yet it fits perfectly into Stoker's sociological design. The American, Morris, *must* die, because Morris is a vampire. From his first appearance he is shrouded in mystery (a friendly sort of mystery, it is true—but isn't Count Dracula himself likeable, at the beginning?). 'He is such a nice fellow, an American from Texas, and he looks so young and so fresh that it seems almost impossible that he has

been to so many places and has had such adventures.' What places? What adventures? Where does all his money come from? What does Mr Morris do? Where does he live? Nobody knows any of this. But nobody suspects. Nobody suspects even when Lucy dies—and then turns into a vampire—immediately after receiving a blood transfusion from Morris. Nobody suspects when Morris, shortly afterwards, tells the story of his mare, sucked dry of blood in the Pampas by 'one of those big bats that they call vampires'.

It is the first time that the name 'vampire' is mentioned in the novel: but there is no reaction. And there is no reaction a few lines further on when Morris, 'coming close to me, ... spoke in a fierce half-whisper: "What took it [the blood] out?"' But Dr Seward shakes his head; he hasn't the slightest idea. And Morris, reassured, promises to help. Nobody, finally, suspects when, in the course of the meeting to plan the vampire hunt, Morris leaves the room to take a shot—missing, naturally—at the big bat on the window-ledge listening to the preparations; or when, after Dracula bursts into the household, Morris hides among the trees, the only effect of which is that he loses sight of Dracula and invites the others to call off the hunt for the night. This is pretty well all Morris does in Dracula. He would be a totally superfluous character if, unlike the others, he were not characterized by this mysterious connivance with the world of the vampires. So long as things go well for Dracula, Morris acts like an accomplice. As soon as there is a reversal of fortunes, he turns into his staunchest enemy. Morris enters into competition with Dracula; he would like to replace him in the conquest of the Old World. He does not succeed in the novel but he will succeed, in 'real' history, a few years afterwards.

While it is interesting to understand that Morris is connected with the vampires because America will end up by subjugating Britain in reality and Britain is, albeit unconsciously, afraid of it—the decisive thing is to understand why Stoker does not portray him as a vampire. The answer lies in the bourgeois conception of monopoly described earlier. For Stoker, monopoly wast be feudal, oriental, tyrannical. It cannot be the product of that very society he wants to defend. And Morris, naturally, is by contrast a product of Western civilization, just as America is a rib of Britain and American capitalism a consequence of British capitalism. To make Morris a vampire would mean accusing capitalism directly; or rather accusing Britain, admitting that it is Britain herself that has given birth to the monster. This cannot be. For the good of Britain, then, Morris must be sacrificed. But Britain must be kept out of a crime whose legitimacy she cannot recognize. He will be killed by the chance knife-thrust of a gypsy (whom the British will allow to escape unpunished). And at the moment when Morris dies, and the threat disappears, old England grants its blessing to this excessively pushy and unscrupulous financier, and raises him to the dignity of a Bengal Lancer: 'And, to our bitter grief, with a smile and silence, he died, a gallant gentleman.' (The sentence significantly abounds in the clichés of heroic-imperial English literature). These, it should be noted, are the last words of the novel, whose true ending does not lie—as is clear by now—in the death of the Romanian count, but in the killing of the American financier.

One of the most striking aspects of Dracula as of Frankensium before it—is its system of narrative senders. To begin with, there is the fact that in this network of letters, diaries, notes, telegrams, notices, phonograph recordings and articles, the narrative function proper, namely the description and ordering of events, is reserved for the British alone. We never have access to Van Helsing's point of view, or to Morris's, and still less to Dracula's. The string of events exists only in the form and with the meaning stamped upon it by British Victorian culture. It is those cultural categories, those moral values, those forms of expression that are endangered by the vampire: it is those same categories, forms and values that reassert themselves and emerge triumphant. It is a victory of convention over exception, of the present over the possible future, of standard British English over any kind of linguistic transgression.

In Dracula we have, transparently, the perfect and immutable English of the narrators on the one hand, and Morris's American 'dialect', Dracula's schoolbook English and Van Helsing's bloomers on the other. As Dracula is a danger because he constitutes an unforeseen variation from the British cultural code, so the maximum threat on the plane of content coincides with the maximum inefficiency and dislocation of the English language. Half way through the novel, when Dracula seems to be in control of the situation, the frequency of Van Helsing's speeches increases enormously, and his perverse English dominates the stage. It becomes dominant because although the English language possesses the word 'vampire', it is unable to ascribe a meaning to it, in the same way that British society considers 'capitalist monopoly' a meaningless expression. Van Helsing has to explain, in his approximate and mangled English, what a vampire is. Only then, when these notions have been translated into the linguistic and cultural code of the English, and the code has been reorganized and reinforced, can the narrative return to its previous fluidity, the hunt begin and victory appear secure. It is entirely logical that the last sentence should be, as we saw, a veritable procession of literary English.

In Dracula there is no ominiscient narrator, only individual and mutually separate points of view. The first-person account is a clear expression of the desire to keep hold of one's individuality, which the vampire threatens to subjugate. Yet so long as the conflict is one between human 'individualism' and vampinical 'totalization', things do not go at all well for the humans. Just as a system of perfect competition cannot do other than give way to monopoly, so a handful of isolated individuals cannot oppose the concentrated force of the vampire. It is a problem we have already witnessed on the plane of content; here it reemerges on the plane of narrative forms. The individuality of the narration must be preserved and at the same time its negative aspect—the doubt, importance, ignorance and even mutual distrust and hostility of the protagonists must be eliminated. Stoker's solution is brilliant. It is to collate, to make a systematic integration of the different points of view. In the second half of Dracula, that of the hunt (which begins, it should be noted, only after the collation), it is more accurate to speak of a 'collective' narrator than of different narrators. There are no longer, as there were at the beginning, different versions of a single episode, a procedure which expressed the uncertainty and error of the individual account. The narrative now

expresses the general point of view, the official version of events. Even the style loses its initial idiosyncrasies, be they professional or individual, and is amalgamated into Standard British English. This collation is, in other words, the Victorian compromise in the field of narrative technique. It unifies the different interests and cultural paradigms of the dominant class (law, commerce, the land, science) under the banner of the common good. It restores the narrative equilibrium, giving this dark episode a form and a meaning which are finally clear, communicable and universal.

II. The Return of the Repressed

A sociological analysis of Frankenstein and Dracula reveals that one of the institutions most threatened by the monsters is the family. Yet this fear cannot be explained wholly in historical and economic terms. On the contrary, it is very likely that its deepest root is to be found elsewhere: in Eros. 'Dracula', David Pirie has written, '... can be seen as the great submerged force of Victorian libido breaking out to punish the repressive society which had imprisoned it; one of the most appalling things that Dracula does to the matronly women of his Victorian enemies (in the novel as in the film) is to make them sensual.' It is true. For confirmation one only has to reread the episode of Lucy. Lucy is the only character who falls victim to Dracula. She is punished, because she is the only one who shows some kind of desire. Stoker is inflexible on this point: all the other characters are immune to the temptations of the flesh, or capable of rigorous sublimations. Van Helsing, Morris, Seward and Holmwood are all single. Mina and Jonathan get married in hospital, when Jonathan is in a state of prostration and impotence; and they marry in order to mend, to forget the terrible experience (which was also sexual) undergone by Jonathan in Transylvania. 'Share my ignorance' is what he asks of his wife.

Not so Lucy, who awaits her wedding day with impatience. It is on this restlessness—on her 'somnambulism'—that Dracula exerts leverage to win her. And the more he takes possession of Lucy, the more he brings out her sexual side. A few moments before her death, 'She opened her eyes, which were now dull and hard at once, and said in a soft voluptuous voice, such as I had never heard from her lips: ...'. And Lucy as a 'vampire' is even more seductive: 'The sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness. ... the face became wreathed with a voluptuous smile ... she advanced to him with outstretched arms and a wanton smile ... and with a langorous, voluptuous grace, said: "Come to me, Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!"' The seduction is about to work, but Van Helsing breaks its spell. They proceed to Lucy's execution. Lucy dies in a very unusual way: in the throes of what, to the 'public' mind of the Victorians, must have seemed like an orgasm: 'The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam.' Surrounded by his friends who goad him on with their cries, Arthur Holmwood Lord Godalming purges the world of this fearful Thing; not without deriving,

in distorted but transparent forms, enormous sexual satisfaction: 'He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it.'

Dracula, then, liberates and exalts sexual desire. And this desire attracts but—at the same time—frightens. Lucy is beautiful, but dangerous. Fear and attraction are one and the same; and not just in Stoker. Much of nineteenth-century bourgeois high culture had already treated Eros and sex as ambivalent phenomena. Their rhetorical figure is the oxymoron, the contradiction in terms, through which Baudelaire sings the ambiguity of amorous relations. Among the condemned poems of Les Fleurs du Mal-a title which is itself an oxymoron—is 'Les métamorphoses du vampire', where the irresistible female seducer is described 'twisting like a snake over charcoal'. And Stendhal noted in the margin of the first page of Del'Amour. I undertake to trace with a mathematical precision and (if I can) truth, the history of the illness called love.' Love is an illness: it entails the renunciation of his individuality and reason. For Stendhal, the devotee of enlightenment, this means denying one's very reason for existing. Love becomes a mortal danger, and only a greater danger (Draculal) can cure the person who falls victim to it: 'The leap from Leucates was a fine image in antiquity. In fact, the remedy for love is almost impossible. It requires not only that danger which sharply recalls a man's attention to his own preservation; it also requires—something far more difficult—the continuity of an enticing danger.' An enticing danger, just as that of love is a dangerous enticement: fear and desire incessantly overturn into one another. They are indivisible. We find this confirmed in Sade, in Keats's Lamia, in Poe's Ligera, in Baudelaire's women, in Hoffmann's woman vampire. Why is this?

The Psychoanalysis of Vampirism

Vampirism is an excellent example of the identity of desire and fear: let us therefore put it at the centre of the analysis. And let us take the psychoanalytic interpretation of this phenomenon, advanced for example by Marie Bonaparte in her study of Poe. Commenting on Baudelaire's remark that all Poe's women are 'strikingly delineated as though by an adorer', Marie Bonaparte adds: 'An adorer... who dare not approach the object of his adoration, since he feels it surrounded by some fearful, dangerous mystery.' This mystery is none other than vampirism:

The danger of sexuality, the punishment that threatens all who yield, is shown, as in Berence, by the manner in which Egaeus is obsessed by her teeth. And indeed, in psychoanalysis, many cases of male impotence reveal, though more or less buried in the unconscious—strange as it may seem to many a reader—the notion of the female vagina being furnished with teeth, and thus a source of danger in being able to bite and castrate. . . . Mouth and vagina are equated in the unconscious and, when Egaeus yields to the morbid impulse to draw Berenice's teeth, he yields both the yearning for the mother's organ and to be revenged upon it, since the dangers that hedge it about make him

sexually avoid all women as too menacing. His act is therefore a sort of retributive castration inflicted on the mother whom he loves, and yet hates, because obdurate to his sex-love for her in infancy. ... This concept of the pagina dentata and its consequent menace is, however, also a displacement (in this case downwards) of a factor with roots deep in infantile experience. We know that babes which, while toothless, are content to suck the breast, no sooner cut their first teeth than they use them to bite the same breast. This, in each of us, is the first manifestation of the aggressive instinct, ... later, when the sense of what 'one should not do' has been instilled by ever severer and more numerous moral injunctions ... the memory, or rather the phantasy of biting the mother's breast must become charged, in the unconscious, with past feelings of wickedness. And the child, having learnt by experience what is meant by the law of retaliation when he infringes the code . . . begins, in his turn, to fear that the bites he wished to give his mother will be visited on him: namely, retaliation for his 'cannibalism'.

This passage identifies with precision the *ambivalent* root, interweaving hate and love, that underlies vampirism. An analogous ambivalence had already been described by Freud in relation to the taboo on the dead (and the vampire is, as we know, also a dead person who comes back to life to destroy those who remain):

.. this hostility, distressingly felt in the unconscious as satisfaction over the death . . [is displaced] on to the object of the hostility, on to the dead themselves. Once again . . . we find that the taboo has grown up on the basis of an ambivalent emotional attitude. The taboo upon the dead arises, like the others, from the contrast between conscious pain and unconscious satisfaction over the death that has occurred. Since such is the origin of the ghost's resentment, if follows naturally that the survivors who have the most to fear will be those who were formerly its nearest and dearest

Freud's text leaves no doubt: the ambivalence exists within the psyche of the person suffering from the fear. In order to heal this state of tension one is forced to repress, unconsciously, one of the two affective states in conflict, the one that is socially more illicit. From this repression arises fear: 'every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety'. And fear breaks out when—for whatever reason—this repressed impulse returns and thrusts itself upon the mind: 'an uncanny experience occurs either when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once again to be confirmed.' Fear, in other words, coincides with the 'return of the repressed'. And this brings us perhaps to the heart of the matter.

The Monster Within

The literature of terror is studded with passages where the protagonists brush against the awareness described by Freud that the perturbing element is within them: that it is they themselves that produce the monsters they fear. Their first fear is inevitably that of going mad. 'Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman.' (Frankenstein) 'God preserve my sanity... there is but one thing to hope for; that I may not go mad, if, indeed, I be not mad already.' (Dracula, Harker's words) '[Dr Seward] says that I afford him a curious psychological study'. (Lucy) I have come to the conclusion that it must be something mental.' (Seward, who is also the director of a mental hospital) Jekvil has to defend himself from the suspicion of being mad, just like Polidori's Aubrey a century earlier. In these novels, reality tends to work according to the laws that govern dreams: 'I wasn't dreaming', 'as in a dream', 'as if I had gone through a long nightmare'. This is the return of the repressed. But bow does it return? Not as madness, or only marginally so. The lesson these books wish to impart is that one need not be afraid of going mad; that is, one need not fear one's own repressions, the splitting of one's own psyche. No, one should be afraid of the monster, of something material, something external.

""Dr Van Helsing, are you mad?" ... "Would I were!" he said. "Madness were easy to bear compared with truth like this." Would I were: this is the key. Madness is nothing in comparison with the vampire. Madness does not present a problem. Or rather: madness, in itself, does not exist: it is the vampire, the monster, the potion that creates it. Dracula, written in the same year that saw Freud begin his self-analysis, is a refined attempt by the nineteenth-century mind not to recognize itself. This is symbolized by the character who—already in the grip of fear—finds himself by chance in front of a mirror. He looks at it and jumps: in the mirror is a reflection of his face. But the reader's attention is immediately distracted: the fear does not come from his having seen his own image, but from the fact that the nampire is not reflected in the mirror. Finding himself face to face with the simple, terrible truth, the author—and with him the character and the reader—draws back in horror.

The repressed returns, then, but disguised as a monster. For a psychoanalytic study, the main fact is precisely this metamorphosis. As Francesco Orlando has remarked of his analysis of Racine's Phèdre, 'the relationship between the unconscious and literature was not postulated according to the presence of contents, whatever their nature, in the literary work ... perverse desire could not have been acceptable as content in the literary work without the latter's also accepting the formal model capable of filtering it.' This formal model is the monster metaphor, the vampire metaphor. It 'filters', makes bearable to the conscious mind those desires and fears which the latter has judged to be unacceptable and has thus been forced to repress, and whose existence it consequently cannot recognize. The literary formalization, the rhetorical figure, therefore has a double function: it expresses the unconscious content and at the same time bides it. Literature always contains both these functions. Taking away one or the other would mean eliminating either the problem of the unconscious (by asserting that everything in literature is

transparent and manifest) or the problem of literary communication (by asserting that literature serves only to hide certain contents).

Yet while these two functions are always present in the literary metaphor, the relationship between them can nevertheless change. One can stand out more than the other and win a dominant position within the overall signification of the work. These observations have a direct bearing on our argument, because the metaphor of the vampire is a splendid example of how the equilibrium of literary functions can vary. The problem can be posed thus; what is the sex—in literature, naturally, not in reality—are vampires? Vampires, unlike angels, do have a sex, it changes. In one set of works (Poe, Hoffmann, Baudelaire: 'elite' culture) they are women. In another (Polidori, Stoker, the cinema: 'mass' culture) they are men. The metamorphosis is by no means accidental. At the root of vampirism, as we have seen, lies an ambivalent impulse of the child towards its mother. To present the vampire as a woman therefore means to make relatively little distortion of the unconscious content. The literary figure still retuins the essential element—the sex—of that which is at the source of the perturbation. The defences that literature puts up to protect the conscious mind are relatively elastic: D.H. Lawrence (as Baudelaire, implicitly, before him) passes with ease from the vampure theme back to Poe's perverse erotic desires. But if the vampire becomes a man, the unconscious source of the perturbation is hidden by a further layer of signifieds. The link becomes more tenuous. The conscious mind can rest easy: all that remains of the original fear is a word, 'Dracula': that splendid and inexplicable feminine name. The metamorphosis, in other words, serves to protect the conscious mind, or more precisely to keep it in a state of greater unawareness. The vampire is transformed into a man by mass culture, which has to promote spontaneous certainties and cannot let itself plumb the unconscious too deeply. Yet at the same time and for precisely this reason, the repressed content, which has remained unconscious, produces an irresistible fear. Spurious certainties and terror support each other.

III. The Strategy of Terror

Marxist analysis and psychoanalytic analysis have permitted us to isolate two prominent groups of signifieds which come together in the literature of terror and which render it necessary, so to speak. They are, clearly, different signifieds, and it is hard to unite them harmoniously. I do not propose here to reconstruct the many missing links that might connect socio-economic structures and sexual-psychological structures in a single conceptual chain. Nor can I say whether this undertaking—attempted many times and in many different ways—is really possible: whether, that is, it is permissible to 'integrate' Marxism and psychoanalysis into a much broader and much more solid science of modern society. It is a highly complicated scientific problem, and I do not intend to broach its general aspects. I would merely like to explain the two reasons that—in this specific case—persuaded me to use two such different methodologies. The first is rather obvious. The central characters of this literature—the monster, the vampire—are metaphors, rhetorical figures built on the analogy between different semantic fields. Wishing to incarnate Fear as such, they must of necessity combine fears that have different causes:

economic, ideological, psychical, sexual (and others should be added, beginning with religious fear). This fact seems to me to make it possible, if not obligatory, to use different tools in order to reconstruct the multiform roots of the terrorizing metaphor.

But the monster and the vampire are metaphors for another reason too. Not only in order to synthesize phenomena of different natures, but also to transform them: to change their form, and with it their meaning. In Dracula there is monopoly capital and the fear of the mother; but these meanings are subordinated to the literal presence of the murderous count. They can be expressed only if they are hidden (or at least trans-formed) by his black cloak. Only in this way can the social consciousness admit its own fears without laving itself open to stigma. Marxism and psychoanalysis thus converge in defining the function of this literature: to take up within itself determinate fears in order to present them in a form different from their real one; to transform them into other fears, so that readers do not have to face up to what might really frighten them. It is a 'negative' function: it distorts reality. It is a work of 'mystification'. But it is also a work of 'production'. The more these great symbols of mass culture depart from reality the more, of necessity, they must expand and enrich the structures of false consciousness: which is nothing other than the dominant culture. They are not confined to distortion and falsification: they form, affirm, convince. And this process is automatic and self-propelling. Mary Shelley and Bram Stoker do not have the slightest intention of 'mystifying' reality: they interpret and express it in a spontaneously mendacious manner.

This becomes clearer if we go back once again to the fact that monsters are metaphors. Now generally, in literature, metaphors are constructed (by the author) and perceived (by the reader) precisely as metaphors. But in the literature of terror this rule no longer applies. The metaphor is no longer a metaphor: it is a character as real as the others. "The supernatural', Todorov has written, 'often appears because we take a figurative sense literally.' Taking the figurative sense literally means considering the metaphor as an element of reality. It means, in other words, that a particular intellectual construction—the metaphor and the ideology expressed within it—really has become a 'material force', an independent entity, that escapes the rational control of its user. The intellectual no longer builds the cultural universe; rather, this universe speaks through the intellectual's mouth. After all, this is a familiar story: it is the story of Dr Frankenstein. In Mary Shelley's novel, the monster, the metaphor, still appears, at least in part, as something constructed, as a product. The monster, she warns us, is something 'impossible as a physical fact': it is something metaphorical. Yet the monster lines. Frankenstein's first moment of terror arises precisely in the face of this fact: a metaphor gets up and walks. Once this has happened, he knows that he will never be able to regain control of it. From now on, the metaphor of the monster will lead an autonomous existence: it will no longer be a product, a consequence, but the very origin of the literature of terror. By the time of Dracula—which carries the logic of this literature to its furthest consequences—the vampire has existed since time immemorial, uncreated and inexplicable.

A Conservative Restoration

There is another point on which the works of Shelley and Stoker diverge radically from one another: the effect they mean to produce on the reader. The difference, to paraphrase Benjamin, can be put like this: a description of fear and a frightening description are by no means the same thing. Frankenstein (like Jekyll and Hyde) does not want to scare readers, but to convince them. It appeals to their reason. It wants to make them reflect on a number of important problems (the development of science, the ethic of the family, respect for tradition) and agree—rationally—that these are threatened by powerful and hidden forces. In other words it wants to get readers' assent to the 'philosophical' arguments expounded in black and white by the author in the course of the narration. Fear is made subordinate to this design: it is one of the means used to convince, but not the only one, nor the main one. The person who is frightened is not the reader, but the protagonist. The fear is resolved within the text, without penetrating the text's relationship with its addressee. Mary Shelley uses two stylistic expedients to achieve this effect. She fixes the narrative time in the past: and the past attenuates every fear, because the intervening time enables one not to remain a prisoner of events. Chance is replaced by order, shock by reflection, doubt by certainty—all the more completely in that (the second expedient) the monster has nothing unknown about him: we watch Frankenstein assemble him piece by piece, and we know from the start what characteristics he will have. He is threatening because he is alive and because he is big, not because he is beyond rational comprehension. For fear to arise, reason must be made insecure. As Barthes puts it: "suspense" grips you in the "mind", not in the "guts".

The narrative structure of Dracula, the real masterpiece of the literature of terror, is different. Here the narrative time is always the present, and the narrative order—always paratactic—never establishes causal connections. Like the narrator, the readers has only clues: then sees the effects, but do not know the causes. It is precisely this situation that generates suspense. And this, in its turn, reinforces the readers' identification with the story being narrated. They are dragged forcibly into the text; the characters' fear is also theirs. Between text and reader there no longer exists that distance which in Frankenstein stimulated reflection. Stoker does not want a thinking reader, but a frightened one. Of course, fear is not an end in itself: it is a means to obtain consent to the ideological values we have examined. But this time, fear is the only means. In other words the conviction is no longer in the least rational: it is just as unconscious as the terror that produces it. And thus, while professing to save a reason threatened by hidden forces, the literature of terror merely enslaves it more securely. The restoration of a logical order coincides with unconscious and irrational adherence to a system of values beyond dispute. Professing to save the individual, it in fact annuls him. It presents society—whether the feudal idyll of Frankenstein or the Victorian England of Dracula—28 a great corporation: whoever breaks its bonds is done for. To think for oneself, to follow one's own interests: these are the real dangers that this literature wants to exorcise. Illiberal in a deep sense, it mirrors and promotes the desire for an integrated society, a capitalism that manages to be 'organic'.

This is the literature of dialectical relations, in which the opposites, instead of separating and entering into conflict, exist in function of one another, reinforce one other. Such, for Marx, is the relation between capital and wage labour. Such, for Freud, is the relation between super-ego and unconscious. Such, for Stendhal, is the bond between the lover and the 'illness' he calls 'love'. Such is the relationship that binds Frankenstein to the monster and Lucy to Dracula. Such, finally, is the bond between the reader and the literature of terror. The more a work frightens, one the more it edifies. The more it humiliates, the more it uplifts. The more it hides, the more it gives the illusion of revealing. It is a fear one **med*: the price one pays for coming contentedly to terms with a social body based on irrationality and menace. Who says it is escapist?

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Tariq Ali

Midnight's Children

Midnight's Children* has been widely acclaimed as a literary tour de force. It has won plaudits for its author, Salman Rushdie, from critics throughout the Anglo-Saxon world and has been awarded the prestigious Booker Prize. Rushdie has been compared, at different times, to Gunter Grass and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, whose influences, openly acknowledged, are evident in Midnight's Children. Saleem Sinai, the semi-autobiographical narrator and central figure in the book, has definite affinities with Oskar in The Tin Draw, and it would not be difficult to find the Latin American equivalents of the sub-continent's generals in Animum of the Patriarch. However, these analogies are not of prime significance. Danzig/Gdansk and Macondo are not Bombay.

Rushdie's work provokes comparisons not only with Grass or Marquez, but with other writers who have made India their subject. The reason this has not been done so far is because English critics and commentators have tended to downplay the politics of Midnight's Children Whether this is the result of guilt, embarrassment, ignorance or a combination of all three is a matter for speculation. What is beyond doubt is that Rushdie's novel is centrally an attack on clearly identifiable targets: the indigenous ruling classes in South Asia. His book is not simply a pleasing mosaic of everyday life in the South Asian sub-continent. It is a devastating political indictment of those who rule these countries and, by implication, of those who placed them in their present positions of power and privilege. In that sense it is fair to say that the publication of Midnight's Children marks an important turning point in the relatively short life-span of Indo-English literature.

It is important to briefly recall the evolution of this rather unusual literary tradition. The Thirties and Forties were crucially important decades in India as elsewhere. The rising tide of nationalism, the growth of the Communist Party and the birth of militant trade unionism produced a ferment in the country's intelligentsia. The formation of the Anti-Fascist League of Writers and the Progressive Writers Association (both bodies were essentially CPI front organizations) helped to channel the anger of writers, poets and playwrights in leftist directions. The foremost exponent of socialist realism in the English language was the Indian novelist Mulk Raj Anand, who deliberately confined his scope to writing about those who were well below the lowest rung of the social ladder. The Coolse and The Untouchable exemplify his politico-literary project. Further south in Madras, V.K. Narayan was beginning to produce novels that were the polar opposite of Anand's. Narayan wrote semi-mystical social comedies of village life in Southern India, whose cumulative impact was to idealize Hinduism and the Indian village. His formula appealed only a

^{*} Multight's Children by Salman Rushdie, Cape, London 1981.

limited layer of Indians, but was extremely popular with English civil servants. (He remains to this day a great favourite of V.S. Naipaul. One can see why.) It was only after 1960 that the new Indian novel emerged on the scene. It is essential at this point to comment briefly on what surely must be considered the main forebear of Midnight's Children. I refer to the series of four novels by Paul Scott commonly known as The Ray Quartet and currently being filmed in India by Granada TV. In literary and political inclination. Paul Scott (he died prematurely of cancer in 1977) was far removed from Salman Rushdie. Yet his novels are one of the most evocative accounts of the last decades of British colonialism in India. Scott succeeds in depicting the nuances of imperialist strategy far better than most political tracts and in the process he helps to explain how the British managed to rule India for so long without facing a generalized revolt. He portrays the marriage between the colonial administration and the indigenous landed gentry with a rare subtlety and sensitivity. His representation of colonial racism and of the peculiarities of the English racist have direct relevance to the domestic racism of Britain today.

The ideological heritage of the ray has often been talked about, but rarely analysed in detail. Imperialism wove a powerful web which sought to imprison the consciousness of those whom it oppressed. It instilled a self-hatred based on race and colour that redoubled the discriminations of caste society. The natives were 'taught' to regard the white skin as a mark of superiority. True, this was not simply a case of ideological aggression. White 'superiority' was backed up not simply by Kipling—the 'hireling minstrel' of British imperialism—and the hordes of missionaries who descended on the colonies like parasites, but by material strength and privileges. When sections of the oppressed did challenge this myth they were ruthlessly put down. Scott's quartet of novels facilitate our knowledge of colonial racism, but shy away from discussing its illegitimate offspring: even today in India the Northerners regard the Southerners as inferior because of their slightly darker complexion. Moreover this phenomena is largely restricted to three distinct, though interrelated layers of South Asian society: the ruling classes, the civil service and the Army. All three are direct descendants of the ray. This deformation is the extreme opposite of Anglo-American racism which is widespread amongst the underprivileged layers of the white population and is cynically exploited by a heartless governing class.

The very process of 'midnight' (India and Pakistan obtained their independence at the stroke of midnight, hence the title of Rushdie's novel) was determined by a concordat between the departing colonial power and the two nationalist parties. (It is worth noting that both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League were set up on the initiative of Englishmen.) A reading of Scott is thus useful if one wishes to explore the parentage of 'midnight's children'.

Rushdie's 'History'

'Reality', writes Salman Rushdie in his book, 'can have metaphorical content. A thousand and one children were born; there were a thousand and one possibilities which had never been present in one place at one

time before; and there were a thousand and one dead ends. Midnight's children can be made to represent many things, according to your point of view: they can be seen as the last throw of everything antiquated and retrogressive in our myth-ridden nation, whose defeat was entirely desirable in the context of a modernizing twentieth-century economy; or as the true hope of freedom, which is now forever extinguished.'

Before commenting on the accuracy or otherwise of this counterposition it is worth drawing attention to the two-part structure of the novel. The first half is essentially a recreation of the past. Grandfather Aadam Aziz returns home after studying medicine and Lenin's What Is To Be Done at Heidelberg. He leaves behind a German lover and companion, Ilse Lubin, and is soon embroiled in a traditional arranged marriage to the daughter of a rural notable. His first glimpse of this bride-to-be is through a hole in a sheet. Ilse comes to visit him in India, hears of his new love and drowns herself in the still waters of Srinagar's Dal Lake in Kashmir. Here, at the very start of the novel, is a symbolic rendering of a theme that will recur: modernization is fighting a losing battle. Father Ahmed Sinai is the protagonist of another symbolic event. We see him purchasing an Englishman's mansion in fashionable Bombay in an area previously reserved for the 'pink conquerers'. This image stays with us throughout the novel; the houses, offices, uniforms, attitudes, style and manners of the ray are being usurped by a new ruling class. This class has grown up in the shadow of the colonialists, but has been permitted to observe its betters from a distance; now cossetted, now rejected, it is ready and waiting to step into the shoes of its former rulers. Even its most urbane and cultured spokesmen speak an unfamiliar jargon. 'Long years ago', declares a tearful Jawaharlal Nehru as the clock chimes the twelfth stroke of midnight on 15 August 1947, 'we made a tryst with destiny. . . .' His sentiments are comprehensible to the poorest and humblest citizen, but the language in which he chooses to communicate with the masses is English. In neighbouring Pakistan, M.A. Jinnah addresses hundreds of thousands of illiterate peasants, many of them unversed even in Urdu and confined to speaking their own dialects, in English! As time passes, the veneer of what they have learnt from the English civil servant wears distressingly thin, and then disappears altogether. Rushdie's description of this important transition period is acute and, at times, comic, if lacking in the power and the anger of the novel's second part.

The perspectives of Rushdie's 'history' are sometimes questionable. Saleem Sinai's grandfather Aziz is implacably hostile to separatist Muslim politics and hence to the new confessional state being established in Karachi. They will not migrate, at least not while the old man is alive. Yet the partition episode is almost muted in Midnight's Children. The personal conflicts and the political contradictions that traumatized the bulk of middle-class families in towns that were to remain a part of India has been movingly represented in the Indian film Garam Hava (Hot Winds). The torment and occasional crossing of the communal divide on behalf of trapped friends has been depicted by the Indian writer and journalist Khushwant Singh in his novel Train to Pakistan. The anguish of partition was best described by the first poem of a sixteen-year-old Sikh girl written in 1947. Now one of India's foremost poets, Amrita Pritam appealed then

to the memory of the great Sufi epic poet of the late eighteenth century, Waris Shah. As Sikhs and Muslims slaughtered each other indiscriminately, Pritam wrote:

I say to Waris Shah today,
O speak up from your grave
And from the Book of Love unfurl
A new and different page

When one daughter of the Punjab did weep You wrote a myrad of dirges
Today a million tearful daughters
Recite this message to you.
"Arise you healer of our innermost pains
And look now at your Punjab;
The forests are littered with corpses
And blood flows down the Chenab.1

Again, Rushdie chooses to concentrate on the familiar and much-writtenabout massacre at Jallianwalla Bagh in Amritsar in 1919. This was undoubtedly a major event in the history of the ray, but not as significant in other ways as the Moplah uprising in Malabar in 1921 or the unprecedent Naval Mutiny (and the accompanying General Strike) that shook the authorities in 1946. Of course Midnight's Children is a novel, not a history proper. But it is a novel that self-consciously explores the rich seam of sub-continental history, and its selectivity is not irrelevant. The second part of the novel is far more coherent. Its literary directness and political force confront the reader with a powerful vision.

States of Emergency

Saleem Sinai is a growing man in the late fifties and sixties and fully mature in the seventies. He can thus observe at first hand three crucially important sequences: the military coup in Pakistan in 1958, the struggle for Bangladesh in 1971 and the Indian State of Emergency in 1976. The Sinai family's emigration to Pakistan transforms them all. Saleem's sister is affectionately known in Bombay as the Brass Monkey, a person full of mischief and independence. In Pakistan she becomes a pristine pure Muslim and a singer, who regales the nation with patriotic hymns during the 1965 clashes with India. A key character in this phase of the novel is the self-seeking Muslin army officer Zulfiqar. In the first half he is witnessed as an unctuous subordinate of Brigadier Dodson, who marries Aunt Emerald and realizes that his commercial future lies in Pakistan. By the second half the young major is now a 'Punchinello-faced general' plotting with his fellow-generals at his dinner table to usurp political power in 1958:

General Zulfiqar described troop movements; I moved pepperpots symbolically while he spoke. In the clutches of the active-metaphorical mode of connection, I shifted salt-cellars and bowls of chutney. This mustard-jar is Company A occupying Head Post Office; there are two pepperpots

¹ This is a rough translation from the Punjabi. I apologize to the professional translators in advance for any abortcomings

surrounding a serving spoon, which means Company B has seized the airport With the fate of my nation in my hands, I shifted condiments and cutlery, capturing empty biriani-dishes with water glasses, stationing salt-cellars, on guard, around water jugs. And when General Zulfiqar stopped talking, the march of the table-service also came to an end. Ayub Khan seemed to settle down in his chair, was the wink he gave to me just my imagination? At any rate the Commander-in-Chief said, "Very good, Zulfiqar; Good show." A few weeks later the real pepperpots had taken over the country.

Zulfigar is, in many ways, Rushdie's most inspired creation. A Pakistani version of Ronald Merrick in Paul Scott's Ray Quartet, he is an archetypal, relatively privileged, middle-class Muslim refugee from India. His chosen profession is the army. Years of loyalty to his British superiors are now transferred to his new Punjabi bosses in Pakistan. (Like most officers of his generation he is shallow in the extreme, probably regards the Reader's Digest as incisive and Time magazine as far too intellectual.) He is crude, calculating, corrupt and callous. His servility to his superior officers reaches the proportions of self-parody. His son Zafar is a great disappointment. The lad still wets his bed. Urinary disorders are, of course, unmanly—an attribute General Zulfigar extends to all Hindus. Rushdie's delineation of a Pakistan run by generals and fed daily on the poison of communal and national chauvinism, interspersed with character sketches of feudal rulers of decrepit states, mothers who 'eavesdrop on the daughter's dreams', childhood love, youthful fantasies and the effect of alcohol—constitutes one of the most powerful passages in the book.

The position of Zulfiqar as a central actor on Rushdie's stage symbolizes the elements of continuity and discontinuity in the period preceding and following 1947. It is this sort of army officer, who will organize and push through atrocities on a grand scale. Rushdie's account of the Pakistani invasion of East Bengal is unique in Indo-English literature. It is a portraval not simply of wicked individuals (though there are plenty of these), but of the collective frenzy of a desperately frightened ruling class: the training of special commando units to kill Bengalis, the constant use of semi-fascist communal imagery, all designed to justify and facilitate the task of murdering Bengali intellectuals and workers. The Bengalis were not 'proper Muslims'. There were relatively recent converts from Hinduism, declared many a Punjabi military maniac in 1970-71. Rape was justified on the grounds that 'we were going to implant genuine Muslim seeds in these black Bengali bitches'. (I still remember these words being quoted to me by a young army officer, who, to his credit was so disgusted that he left the army and subsequently the country.)

Reading Midnight's Children brought back many old memories. I can still recall the amazement of my Bengali friends and comrades when in March 1969 at a public meeting in Dacca University I argued that there was no hope for any meaningful autonomy and that they should aim for a 'Lal Bangla' (Red Bengal). In private, I told many disbelieving Bengalis that the army would engage in large-scale massacres rather than concede their

demands. Many of those with whom I argued are now dead. Some died on the first day of the Pakistani military offensive, here described by Rushdie:

Midnight, March 25, 1971: past the University, which was being shelled, the buddha led troops to Sheikh Mujib's lair. Students and lecturers came running out of hostels; they were greeted by bullets, and Merchurichrome stained the lawns... And while we drove through the city streets, Shaheed looked out of windows and saw things that weren't-couldn't-have-been true: soldiers entering women's hostels without knocking; women dragged into the street, were also entered, and again nobody troubled to knock....

When thought becomes excessively painful, action is the finest remedy ... dog-soldiers strain at the leash, and then, released, leap joyously to their work. O wolfhound chases of undesirables! O prolific seizings of professors and poets! O unfortunate shot-while-resisting arrests of Awami Leaguers and fashion correspondents! Dogs of war cry havoc in the city; ... Farooq Shaheed Ayooba take turns at vomiting as their nostrils are assailed by the stench of burning slums ... No undesirable is safe tonight; no hiding-place impregnable. Bloodhounds track the fleeing enemies of national unity, wolfhounds, not to be outdone, sink fierce teeth into their prey ...

Zulfiqar must be punished for his crimes. His death will be violent, an act of catharsis rather than a political finale. The instrument chosen to despatch the old General is his own son, Zafar, who on discovering that his father is a corrupt scoundrel in league with smugglers, kills him. The act is carried out not in a fit of rage, but calmly, its perpetrator displaying (presumably to everyone's surprise) hitherto hidden reserves. But Zulfiqar's death does not by any means indicate that the travails of 'midnight's children' are over. They will be politically crippled, physically sterilized or vasectomized and be subjected to numerous other indignities by the Widow during her notorious State of Emergency. They will cast her out but her octogenarian replacement ('an ancient dotard who are cashews and pistachios and daily took a "glass of his own water'") surrounded by his own gangsters will not prove much better. The left is seen by Rushdie as a 'Magicians Ghetto' where:

... the prestudigitors, the pullers of rabbits from hats, aligned themselves firmly behind Mr Dange's Moscow-line official cri which supported Gandhi throughout the Emergency; the contortionists, however, began to lean more towards the left and the slanting intricacies of the Chinese-oriented wing. Fire-eaters and sword-swallowers applauded the guerrilla tactics of the Naxalite movement; while mesmerists and walkers-on-hot coals espoused Namboodripad's manifesto (neither Muscovite nor Pekinese) and deplored the Naxalite's violence. There were Trotskyist tendencies amongst card-sharpers, and even a

Communism-through-the-ballot-box movement amongst the moderate members of the ventraloquist section. I had entered a milieu in which, while religious and regionalist bigotry were wholly absent, our ancient national gift for fissiparousness had found new outlets.

If Rushdie had travelled a bit further South he would have been able to pay tribute to another Widow with her own State of Emergency, who destroyed the flower of Ceylonese youth in an orgy of violence. His conclusion would have been further reinforced: 'Midnight has many children; the offspring of Independence were not all human. Violence, corruption, poverty, generals, chaos, greed and pepperpots . . .' But is that all? Is South Asia then mystically fated to lurch from one disaster to another? Or will 'something' happen and, if so, what will it consist of? Are we seeing the end of all hope as is sometimes implied in the text?

The Politics of Pessimian

There is undoubtedly a streak of pessimism and nihilism in the book. In a fascinating self-analysis Rushdie has recently denied the charge, arguing eloquently that his views do not coincide with those of the narrator. He admits that: 'The story of Saleem does indeed lead him to despair. But the story is told in a manner designed to echo, as closely as my abilities allowed, the Indian talent for non-stop regeneration. This is why the narrative constantly throws up new stories, why it "teems". The form—multitudinous, hinting at the infinite possibilities of the country—is the optimistic counterweight to Saleem's personal tragedy. I do not think that a book written in such a manner can really be called a despairing work.'²

Perhaps, but this argument is not totally convincing. In the first place the tension between form and content is not as effective as Rushdie seems to imply. The new stories and sub-stories reinforce each other, and the overpowering impression towards the end is of despair. As for the notion of 'non-stop self-regeneration': what does it mean, if anything? Has village life been characterized by a 'non-stop self-regeneration' over the past six centuries? Or is the term meant to imply the possibilities of a new awakening in terms of political consciousness? In that case one can agree, but the problem is not totally solved. The response to the novel in South Asia has been on a number of levels. In the salons of Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi (and no doubt Bombay and Delhi and Calcutta) it has been a central focus of gossip. Who is General Zulfigar? The fact that the character is partially a pastiche of the now retired General Shahid Hamid has not, of course, escaped anyone, including the original himself. The social snobbery, exaggerated politeness and all the airs and graces associated with Aunt Emerald are still much in evidence and, so I am told, the characters in question have not been particularly amused by the literary efforts of the reprobate Rushdie.

On a deeper level, as Rushdie himself acknowledges, the charge is one of

² 'Imaginary Homelands' by Salman Rushdie, London Review of Books, 7-20 October 1982

pessimism. Many South Asian friends have told me that 'the book has nothing good to say about anything in our part of the world'. It has been pointed out, in response, that the book says nothing that Indians or Pakistanis do not say to each other in private. The feeling of helplessness is much stronger in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India today than it is in Midnight's Children. The tragic fate of the Bangladeshi masses, the triumph of the iron heel in Pakistan, the inability of the CPM regime in Calcutta to satisfy even the minutest aspirations of its followers—has vindicated Rushdie's approach to a certain extent. Midnight's Children is a novel in the tradition of radical-democratic humanism. It goes no further, but as such it is a work of immense importance.

There is, however, a rational kernel in the objections registered by some socialists in the sub-continent. It is not so much the undoubted national nihilism that is a strong element in the work. It is that Rushdie, writing from the outside (as he himself explains), has been able to recreate his subject only partially. This has meant that many extremely rich aspects of the sub-continent's culture and politics are absent. As one example, we could refer to the amazing impact of poetry as a mass medium in South Asia. This is largely due to the fact that the majority of the people are still illiterate in their native languages (leave alone English) and consequently the novel or the short story have not replaced the public poetry-reading or mushaira. Poetry has been the dominant form of literary expression in the sub-continent for the last four hundred years. The gbayal—a short lyrical poem—dates back to the early Mughal courts of medieval India. It is often used to attack (sometimes savagely) the very institutions that permit its existence and, on occasion, the divine Creator as well. The gbayal has survived and is popular to this very day, largely because it is written to be recited rather than read. Many of the sub-continent's poets, both in the decades before and after independence, have stood up and recited what politicians could or dare not say. Iqbal, Tagore, Nazrul Islam, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Josh Malhiabaddi gave birth to a new tradition. They are followed by poets such as Sahir Ludhianvi (now dead) or Habib Jalib, still very much alive and imprisoned by every single regime in Pakistan, or Ahmed Saleem, the Punjabi minstrel who wrote poems for Bengal while Punjabi Generals were embarking on a bloodbath.

One must not idealize our poets. They were and are capable of all sorts of human and political errors, but many of them refused to be silenced or bought. Neither political repression, nor old age, nor poverty, nor personal tragedy, nor rejection by literary policemen or imprisonment by real ones had the capacity of destroying their morale, their patience or their pens. Rushdie would, I'm sure, be deeply moved by Faiz's striking imagery in his poem on the rape of Bangladesh. He would be pleased to discover that the Taj Mahal was already the subject of a savagely Brechtian lyne by Sahir Ludhianvi in the Thirties, which discussed other facts than corridors stinking of urine (a common condition of public telephone boxes in contemporary Britainl). If one is looking for facts long obscured from the public view, hidden from history, carefully concealed lest they excite newer and more dangerous passions, then one need only study the outpourings of South Asia's poets from the highest to the lowest. It is this aspect which is missing from Midnight's Children and

which annoys many who try and conceal their own despair by attacking that of others.

Since Rushdie wrote his book the situation in the sub-continent has deteriorated further. The Saudi Arabians have organized an Islamic coup in Bangladesh, a country that was savaged in the name of Islam. General Zia in Pakistan could not have been created by a novelist. The affluent Afghan refugees who have increased the quantity of heroin produced in Pakistan a hundred times over are prospering well as are the two Generals who are their protectors. The nation is deprived of alcohol, but Islam does not forbid heroin! General Zulfigar's crimes seem almost petty by comparison. It is impossible to read an Indian magazine or newspaper without encountering stories much more grotesque than those that adorn the pages of Midnight's Children. Increasingly the veterans of past struggles, old, not-so-old and young are beginning to ask the same question: 'Was our struggle in vain-?' To some of them (mainly disillusioned Maoists) one can reply forcefully in the affirmative. The Naxalites were the product of a very real, rather than a literary, despair. Their politics were doomed to fail. The gods they worshipped proved unreal. But to the bulk of yesterday's warriors we have to reply. True these answers cannot simply be provided through literary onslaughts or poetic metaphors, yet one must not underestimate the power of ideas. The poet, film-maker and the novelist could, I am convinced, play a much more crucial role than ever before.

Rushdie's novel will not reach the South Asian masses, but it will be read by an English-speaking intelligentsia (probably much larger than in Britain) and, in that sense, it is extremely welcome. The very fact that it is being discussed constitutes a unique tribute to its author. No other novel about India has had such an impact. But what answer do we give to the temporarily atomized intellectual, trade unionist, ex-Naxalite or rankand-file member of the CPM? We could do worse than repeat the words of an old man in his Mexican exile, who had lived through the most massive defeats to be inflicted on the European working class, but who refused to retreat intellectually. In a private letter to a friend who wrote complaining that she was now utterly pessimistic, Trotsky replied: Indignation, anger, revulsion? yes, even temporary weariness. All this is human, only too human. But I will not believe that you have succumbed to pessimism. This would be like passively and plaintively taking umbrage at history. How can one do that? "History has to be taken as it is"; and when she allows herself such extraordinary and filthy outrages, one must fight her back with one's fists.'

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1983 opens as a year of potentially decisive confrontation between NATO and the peace movement. Barring an unexpected thaw in the bellicose intransigence of the United States at Geneva, cruise and Pershing II missiles will be installed on schedule. Although there has been significant wavering on the flanks-notably in Copenhagen and The Hague—the four big NATO powers remain firmly behind Washington's escalation of the arms race. Even if German politics are subject to important revision after the March elections, adamantine opponents of détente will remain entrenched in London and Paris. Andropov's recent disarmament proposals—a highly welcome move by the USSR—have, moreover, cast an embarrassing light upon the 'non-negotiable' nuclear rarsenals brandished by Thatcher and Mitterrand. Within the triangle of forces defined by the Soviet initiative, the crisis of Reaganomics and a groundswell of opinion in NATO countries against further arms build-up, the peace movement now has a historic opportunity to check the new cold war and forestall the new missiles.

What is required, of course, is mobilization and civil disobedience on a scale not witnessed in the West since 1968. Only mass actions inspired by the imagination and firmness of purpose that the women of Greenham Common have come to symbolize can hope to generate a political crisis sufficient to force the NATO governments to change tack. Moreover, as in the sixtles, the surge of protest will grow in power to the extent that its example resonates not only throughout Europe, but across the Atlantic as well. While its immediate strategic and organizational horizon must remain an effective continental coordination, the success of the European peace movement will be vitally affected by the revolts against the cold war and the arms race in Reagan's own frontyard.

In this issue Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway provide the first serious history and analysis of the nuclear 'freeze' movement in the United States. The meteoric growth of this North American protest—now endorsed by scores of local and state referenda in the broadest approximation to a national plebiscite in American history—has been a direct response to the Administration's uninhibited enthusiasm for scenarios of 'winnable' and 'protracted' nuclear war (although, as the authors show, the terrifying substance of US nuclear doctrine has remained remarkably unchanged for twenty years). Supported by

wealthy contributors and public-relations expertise, together with the backing of major churches and environmental groups, the freeze movement has entered the mainstream of US electoral politics far more rapidly than the earlier anti-war movement of the sixties. At the same time, Cockburn and Ridgeway show how this dramatic expression of popular anxiety in face of the nuclear spiral has become increasingly vulnerable to the predictable counter-responses of the political system. On one side, the Democrats are attempting to annex it to their own programme of a rationalized arms race, while on the other, the New Right hunts for KGB connections in a simulacrum of McCarthylsm. The accommodating 'moderation' and anti-radicalism of some of the organizers of the freeze, however, contrasts with the growing militancy of traditional peace groups and, especially, the advocates within the US Catholic Church of a 'theology of peace'. The authors suggest that the future of the freeze movement depends both upon a broadening of grassroots leadership and the adoption of political perspectives that look beyond mere arms control to a systemic critique of the US world-role itself.

As was the case forty years ago, the problem of unemployment is second only to the struggle for peace on the agenda of the Left. At present there are some thirty-two million registered jobless in the advanced capitalist countries, and yet nowhere has the Left succeeded in sustaining a campaign for the ending of unemployment. The introduction of new technology and the recomposition of capital and labour on a world scale make unlikely a return to the 'full employment' of the postwar boom. The cost of social provision for the unemployed has also had the effect of defeating monetarist attempts to reduce the scale of public expenditure, with the consequence that monetarist governments are seeking to destroy historically-won popular rights to health, education and welfare. The workers' movement has traditionally campaigned for statutory reductions in the working day/week, for programmes of public works, for improvements in popular living standards, and for measures transitional to a planned, socialist economy which would check the market mechanisms which generate joblessness under capitalism. Michael Rustin argues in this issue that the demand for a statutory right to work today constitutes an indispensable component of any effective, strategy against unemployment.

Rustin urges that the scourge of unemployment should be met not by advocacy of new macro-economic policies within traditional frameworks and constraints, but by an approach which brings qualitative

considerations to the fore. He proposes that public authorities should have an obligation to provide useful work to all who seek it, at trade-union rates and on condition of gender and ethnic equality. He suggests that the critique of work itself developed by socialists, feminists and ecologists could also inform a statutory programme of full employment, encouraging the development of flexible and creative forms of productive association, with generous provision for free time and educational and aesthetic pursuits. Yet such a proposal, he insists, remains sufficiently modest to join up with existing popular aspirations for full employment within the prevailing social order. Whether actual implementation of such a statutory right is a non-utopian objective in a capitalist economy may be doubted by many socialists. But there can be no doubt that discussion of the merits and feasibility of this proposal whether as an institutional reform within the bourgeois order or as a mobilizing transitional demand out of it-could introduce a fertile new dimension into socialist programmatic debate in the OECD countries today.

Labour-led local government has been a persistent thorn in the side of Thatcher's austerity strategy. Directly across the Thames from the Tory bastion of Westminster is the seat of the most leftwing municipal regime in a European capital since Vienna in the early 1930s. The leader of the Labour majority on the Greater London Council, Ken Livingstone, is both the most capable and hated symbol of the British left apart from Tony Benn. A recent report submitted by Livingstone on behalf of the Labour Group to the GLC vividly outlines the devastation wreaked by Thatcherism upon the inner city and also proposes elements of a coordinated fight-back. Drawing from the recent examples of shopfloor 'counter-planning', Livingstone argues for popular municipal planning and social control over the introduction of new technology.

Wally Seccombe's essay on 'Marxism and Demography' directly addresses a central deficiency of historical materialism: its neglect of the demographic dimension of social change. In an argument of notable cogency and originality, Seccombe locates the mainspring of population dynamics in an expanded concept of the mode of production which integrates the provision of labour-power via determinant complexes of household, family and kinship forms. Focusing on the great demographic transition of the mid-eighteenth to early twentieth centuries in Western Europe, he analyses the four major household types which characterized the labouring classes in this period: peasant, protoindustrial, early-proletarian and mature-proletarian. To each of these

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distinctive reproductive structures there corresponded a definite 'fertility regime' and logic of population growth. Seccombe argues that the transition to capitalism was crucially accelerated by the emergence of a 'proto-industrial' sector, based on rural outwork and with attendant household forms, which burst the 'nuptiality valve' which had previously regulated peasant fertility—hence releasing a virtually inexhaustible reserve of exploitable wage labour. Later, specific household types and fertility regimes accompanied the extensive and intensive phases of the development of industrial capitalism. Seccombe's theorization of the infrastructural relationship of production and reproduction will undoubtedly spark wide discussion and debate.

E.H. Carr who died at the age of ninety last November became the doyen of historians of Soviet Russia after a long and varied prior career, growing ever more trenchantly radical with advancing years, as his interview in NLR 111 (September-October 1978) testified. Tamara Deutscher here recalls the remarkable figure of the man in whose research she collaborated as he brought his magnum opus to a close.

With this issue, the editorship of the Review changes. Perry Anderson, who assumed the post in 1962, has been released for other work within the editorial committee, and Robin Blackburn has succeeded him. The next number of the NLR will be a special issue devoted to key questions of historical materialism on the centenary of Marx's death.

THE ISAAC DEUTSCHER MEMORIAL PRIZE 1983

The Prize for 1983 has been awarded to G. E. M. de Ste Croix for his book *The Class Struggle in the Ancient World: from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests*, published by Duckworths. Dr de Ste Croix is a former Tutor in Ancient History and is now Emeritus Fellow of New College, Oxford.

John Saville
On behalf of the Isaac Deutscher
Memorial Prize.

Alexander Cockburn James Ridgeway

The Freeze Movement Versus Reagan

Although of very recent origin, the 'freeze' movement in the United States has already stimulated the first successful rebellion against a major weapons programme in American history. Prior to December 1982, when Congress turned down Reagan's request for the immediate manufacture of the MX missile, no modern president had ever lost a vote over an important weapons appropriation, nuclear or non-nuclear. To appreciate the relative novelty of the new movement, it should be remembered that in the late 1970s it was a commonplace that the popular surge against civil nuclear power—most conspicuously expressed in the 150,000 turnout for the Washington demonstration in May 1978—was not matched by equivalent agitation about the evils of nuclear power in its military incarnation. Indeed disarmers were often shunned by anti-nuclear-power organizers as either politically compromising or kooky or both. A political context propitious for the rapid growth of a new peace movement only began to be established with the onset of the new cold war: specifically the transition phase from Carter's midterm bellicosity to Reagan's

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inauguration. If any single event was the watershed, it was the unanimous vote of the Senate Armed Services Committee in the fall of 1979 against ratification of the SALT II treaty. This was accompanied by NATO's agreement to the deployment of new 'theatre nuclear' weapons (the Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles) as well as Carter's call for a 3% annual real increase in military spending.

The ensuing rout of liberal conscience is probably best evoked by the memory of Senator Frank Church, tagged as a 'peacenik and appeaser' in a tight re-election race against the New Right in Idaho, suddenly 'discovering' the menace of a Soviet brigade in Cuba and thereupon suspending his support for SALT II. Since Church was then Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, this was the final stake, amid a ventable thicket, through the Treaty's heart. (Church lost anyway.) Amid the moral collapse of the arms controllers, and the spectacle of the Carter Administration promoting the most expensive weapons system ever conceived (the MX in a mobile basing mode), political seismographs began to indicate some reaction from a peace movement more or less in abeyance for most of the seventies. It is true, of course, that some old-line peace groups and organizers had been soldiering on: SANE, the American Friends, the War Resisters' League and similar groups were still active; Dave Dellinger and Sid Lens major figures of the anti-Vietnam-War movement-were helping to found the Mobilization for Survival; and the indomitable Berrigans were still going to jail for acts of conscience.

Birth of the 'Freeze'

But the actual rebirth of the peace movement should probably be dated to the winter of 1979/80 when the American Friends Service Committee called a meeting of arms control and disarmament advocates in the Princeton Club in New York to consider strategy in light not only of an unratified SALT II but also of the imminent manufacture and deployment of new weapons systems, like the cruise missiles, which were beyond the reach of traditional arms control procedures. By April 1980 Randall Forsberg published what could be called the first 'freeze' manifesto. But 1980 was hardly an annu mirabilis for disarmament or arms control. The simmering hysteria of the hostage crisis was combined with the escalating election rhetoric of Ronald Reagan and Carter's promulgation of Presidential Directive 59 with its public disavowal of mutual assured destruction in favour of 'counterforce'. It was not until summer, when organizers reassembled to consider the strategy for demonstrations to

¹ The December votes in the House and Senate did not vote down the MX programme outright. They merely held up money for the manufacture of five MX missiles until an adequate basing plan is produced by the Administration. Both the mobile system proposed by Carter and the 'densepack' basing mode proposed by Weinberger have now failed and it seems highly unlikely that Congress will accept as invulnerable any new proposed mode. The irony is that liberals should never have conceded the principle of allo 'vulnerability' in the first place. But having swept the board with absurd vulnerability scenarios and thus defeated salt II, the hawks are now housted on their own petards. Their intended escape route had been anti-ballistic missiles (ABMS). But in the present political atmosphere it is unlikely that Reagan will push for an end to the ABM Treaty.

² The Armed Services Committee did not have jurisdiction over SALT II, but its opinion was obviously crucial.

accompany the June 1982 UN Special Session on Disarmament, that many present at these meetings agreed that the beginnings of a groundswell against the war lobby and nuclear saber-rattling were at long last apparent.

There were other auguries. In the same summer of 1981, CBS broadcast a five-part series called 'The Defense of the United States' which attracted national attention for its spectacular evocation of what would happen if a nuclear missile hit Omaha, Nebraska. (No more Omaha.) But, more importantly, the programmes also marked the first caesura in five years of virtually uncritical support for the arms buildup by the major networks and newspapers, as CBS openly questioned the premisses under which the Reagan Administration was unleashing a 7% real increase in defense spending while simultaneously talking in loose terms about 'winnable' nuclear war. The pendulum, in fact, had probably started to swing back a year earlier amid the torrid campaign rhetoric of 1980. John Anderson attracted significant though transitory support by saying clearly in April 1980 that he supported SALT II and believed that the Soviet entry into Afghanistan should not prevent its ratification. His stock among the famous 'third force' of the electorate promptly shot up. When, later in the year, he retreated into more cautious and 'statesmanlike' evasions, it shot down again.

Amid the clamour over the supposed Reagan landslide of November 1980, few people noticed the success of a non-binding ballot initiative in three state senate districts in western Massachusetts. The initiative, organized by Randy Kehler and others, called for the President to propose a freeze on the testing and deployment of missiles and delivery systems to President Brezhnev. It won in 30 of 32 towns by a two-to-one margin even though Reagan simultaneously carried the same areas against Carter by a similar margin.

1981, as we have suggested, demonstrated increasingly visible response to a Reagan-Haig-Weinberger triad which, at the most elementary level, was beginning to scare the hell out of people. From spring onward, the Administration's push on El Salvador, and the State Department's White Paper on 'outside' subversion in Central America (so reminiscent of the notorious Rusk White Paper on Vietnam) activated a broad liberal-left constituency. It was not hard for many people to discern in Haig's fractured rhetoric and syntax a determination actually to roll back communism in the Western Hemisphere, even to contemplate another Bay of Pigs. Meanwhile Reagan's public homilies on the immutable evils and eternal dangers of Soviet communism, in the classic idiom of Forrestal and John Foster Dulles, alternated with the Strangelovian ruminations of National Security Advisor Richard Pipes, who blandly forecast a '40%' chance of nuclear war with the USSR with complete recovery from the consequences in only two to four years. Other

³ On another occasion, Pipes, Professor of Soviet Studies at Harvard, said that unless the Soviet Union changed its political nature, war in short order was inevitable. Pipes was one of those summoned by then CIA Director George Bush in 1975 as "Team B' to reconsider the estimates of Soviet strength prepared by regular CIA analysts. "Team B' plumped for worst case estimates of Soviet strength and intentions—thus contributing to the subsequent defeat of SALT II in Congress

superhawks in the various nooks and crannies of the Administration, frolicsome after the darkness of the détente years, bragged of bankrupting the Soviet Union by means of an accelerated arms race. Inimitably, Defense Secretary Weinberger chose Hiroshima Day to announce the manufacture of the neutron bomb. Embryonic peace forces responded with a nationwide series of teach-ins or 'convocations' on the dangers of nuclear war, but Reagan and Weinberger were undeterred by the mobilizing effect of their rhetoric. Their laconic and repeatedly offhanded evocation of nuclear conflict was crowned by the unveiling of the five-year rearmament plan in the spring and by the leaking of the supposedly new doctrine of 'protracted nuclear war fighting'.

Blueprints for Armageddon

Since it is widely imagined that the Reagan administration has radically altered the 'rules' of the nuclear war-game, it is appropriate to briefly clarify the evolution of strategic nuclear doctrine. The reader should recall, after all, that just such a claim about a strategic revolution was made at the time of Carter's Presidential Directive 59, signed in September 1980, and, even earlier, with the so-called 'counterforce' doctrine of Defense Secretary James Schlesinger in 1974. 'Counterforce' (targeting military facilities) alledgedly represented a shift from 'Mutual Assured Destruction' (MAD) as espoused by early administrations with its emphasis on 'countervalue' (the targeting of civilian centres). In fact us strategic doctrine has, in its fundamentals, remained unchanged for twenty years.

Prior to 1960 the United States had no integrated nuclear war-fighting plan. Separate force commanders, like Curtis LeMay of the Strategic Air Command, developed their own targeting plans, which cumulatively would annihilate the population centres and military installations of the USSR. The first 'Single Integrated Operational Plan' (SIOP) was prepared in 1960 and took effect the following year. This SIOP merely integrated the discrete strategic plans of the previous decade. The second plan, technically known as 510P 63, was initiated by McNamara in 1961, operationalized in 1962, and still remains the basic framework of American nuclear doctrine. SIOP 63 was a nuclear war-fighting plan which separated out civil and military options, targeting discretely both military complexes and major population centres, thus allowing the option that the latter could be held hostage as war climbed a 'ladder of escalation'. Since many Soviet military bases and command posts are adjacent to the big population centres, the distinction would be somewhat esoteric to those on the receiving end, but this does not alter the doctrinal thrust of SIOP 63.

⁴ The notion that Reagan and colleagues have turned a new page in nuclear doctrine is suggested in Robert Scheer's book With Enough Shorels (New York 1982) As we will explain, this is misleading, though Scheer's interviews brilliantly display the Reaganite mindset and idiom. Fred Kaplan's The Wingards of Armageddon (New York 1983) is authoritative on the evolution of nuclear doctrine.

⁵ It goes without saying that the stops are highly classified and not to be found in the annual defense posture statements. As a matter of fact, not even the Joint Chiefs of Staff knew Le May's targeting plans

Shortly after Nixon's Inauguration in January 1969, Kissinger ordered a comprehensive review of nuclear strategy: National Security Study Memorandum 3. This evolved into a long document issued be Defense Secretary Schlesinger to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and known as NUWEP (acronym for 'Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy'); an abbreviated policy version of this was signed by President Nixon in 1974 (National Security Decision Memorandum 242). NUWEP/NSDM 242 represent a highly detailed refinement of SIOP 63, necessary because of historic shifts in the balance of terror. In 1962 shortly after Kennedy had campaigned fiercely about the so-called 'Missile Gap' separating a puny America from a muscular Soviet Union, it turned out that the ussa had precisely four ICBMs. By the end of the decade, however, the Soviets had more than a thousand. American nuclear war-fighting superiority evidently required something less than an assault on all land-based Soviet ICBMs if flexible targeting options were to be retained. Hence NUWEP and NSDM 242, both of them refinements rather than departures from SIOP 63.

Carter confirmed NUWEP in 1977 while ordering a new, detailed targeting study. This resulted in the famous Presidential Directive 59 which again confirmed SIDP 63 and heirs, with one novelty: the ability to deploy strategic weapons for battlefield purposes (e.g. the use of an ICBM to destroy a battlefield target in northern Norway). At the same time that Carter signed PD 59, his Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown, issued a revised NUWEP 2 to the Joint Chiefs.

At the level of grand nuclear doctrine the Reagan Administration has initiated no fresh or more perilous departure from tradition. In May 1981 a 'Defense Guidance Memorandum', for internal briefing in the Defense Department, was leaked to the press, causing much national and international commotion. It was in fact prepared by DOD officials Andrew Marshall, Fred Ikle and Richard Perle—all from the old Rand Institute camarilla and as dangerous a trio as you might ever find lurking around a silo—and was once again securely within the heritage of SIOP 63, with some extra bric-à-brac about options in a truly 'protracted' nuclear exchange.

To sum up: so called 'Mutual Assured Destruction' has never been the core dogma of American nuclear strategists. Programmed into the Pentagon's computers for the last twenty years and merely refined ever since are plans to fight and 'win' any exchange with the Soviet Union. A moment's reflection shows that this is not surprising since it is scarcely credible that the us high command would program a MAD scenario even if commonsense tells us, and maybe them, 6 that MAD is what will happen, whatever the SIOP requires.

What has been different about the Reagan regime, however, is that it has largely dispensed with the cumbersome and cauterizing jargon used by its

⁶ It is remarkable how many out-of-power cold warriors have suddenly seen light on the road to Damascus. Robert McNamara, brearrely rehabilitated, now sagely deplores the 'armor plating of the planet', while George Kennan, father of the original Truman Containment Doctrine, calls for a unilateral reduction of its forces to 20% of their present size. As he was retiring at the age of eighty-one, Admiral Hyman Rickover, the single most effective sponsor of military and civil nuclear power, issued to Congress a devastating entique of Pentagon insanity and waste.

predecessors to disguise the unpleasant realities of nuclear strategic doctrine. What Defense Secretaries Laird or Rumsfeld vaguely called 'options', Caspar Weinberger robustly calls 'nuclear war-fighting'. When Haig invoked the notion of 'a nuclear warning shot' in Europe, thus recruiting thousands for the cause of disarmament with a single phrase, he was not announcing a new strategy, just being unusually explicit about an old one. An even more extreme insouciance in the face of Armageddon has become hip style in the lower depths of the Administration. In a famous interview with Robert Scheer of the Los Angeles Times, that lumpen Reaganite T. K. Jones, a deputy under-secretary of Defense, claimed that a fully effective defense against nuclear blast could be improvised with a shovel and a door over a hole in the ground. (In all fairness, however, such inanities are not a monopoly of the current regime. In the summer of 1980 the authors were told by General Daniel Graham, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, that if we were forewarned that a one megaton bomb was going to land on our heads in one hour, all we would have to do was walk four miles and stand behind a lilac bush!)

Putting the Freeze on the Ballot

By the late spring of 1982, after fifteen months of Reaganism in power, the nuclear freeze movement was suddenly multiplying at astonishing speed. The National Nuclear Freeze Clearinghouse in St. Louis reckoned in May 1982 that anti-nuclear organizations were active in 279 congressional districts, with between 17,000 and 20,000 unpaid volunteers. In eleven state legislatures one or both of the houses had already endorsed the freeze.

Amongst the most advanced and sophisticated freeze movements in the country was that in California, bringing together professional political strategists and an enthusiastic grass roots. The California freeze drive began when Joe and Nick Seidita of Los Angeles, impressed by the extraordinary success of the 1980 Massachusetts ballot initiatives, decided to begin organizing a similar freeze resolution for the November 1982 California ballot. Their efforts were significantly enhanced by the support of Harold Willens, a Los Angeles millionaire who had been bankrolling anti-nuclear causes for many years as well as being a major backer of Eugene McCarthy, George McGovern and, to his subsequent regret, Jimmy Carter. Willens' repulsion against nuclear weapons dated back to 1945 when he was sent to Hiroshima and Nagasaki a few weeks after their destruction as a Marine intelligence officer. As a reward for his support of Carter, Willens was nominated as a special us delegate to the first un Special Session on Disarmament in 1978. When the President failed to attend, Willens was first crushed and then infuriated: "This man for whom I had broken my ass . . . this man refused to show up.' Willens returned to California and plunged into organizing local anti-nuclear politics. He turned his energies to the freeze campaign in the summer of 1981 after an early poll showed that if the movement stuck to the narrow issue of the freeze, it would immediately gain twelve points.

Putting an initiative on the ballot in California required Willens to tap big money. He naturally consulted his rich friends in the so-called 'Malibu Masia'—2 wealthy gaggle of liberal personalities in the entertainment industry; but, more significantly, he concentrated on winning the endorsement of mainstream business, religious and educational figures who had never previously supported such a cause. With about \$50,000 in 'seed money', Willens quickly got formal support from Dr. Jonas Salk and other Nobel laureates; religious leaders like Archbishop Quinn of San Francisco, Cardinal Manning of Los Angeles and Rabbi Joseph Asher; as well as tycoons like Brooks Walker, chief executive officer of United States Leasing Corporation.

Needing 346,000 signatures to qualify for the ballot, the California freezers had collected 500,000 within three months of the December 1981 kickoff. As the signature drive gathered momentum, Willens brought in the expertise of the Washington-based firm of Craver, Matthews and Smith—sophisticated direct-mail specialists who are generally considered to be the liberal counterparts to the wizardry of Richard Viguerie of the New Right. They sent a test mailing to a sample of 100,000 and their analysts were amazed. Against the traditional break-even point of 1.5%, the returns on the freeze mailings in California averaged 3.5%, with some lists yielding up to 8%. Contributions averaged \$25. In short, the returns suggested a goldmine virtually unparalleled in the history of modern political fund-raising.

Across the country the freeze movement learned to manipulate the technology and organization of contemporary campaigning. Freeze groups, for example, formed political action committees (PACs), like the Council for a Liveable World's 'Peace PAC', to support pro-freeze candidates in the November elections. Borrowing a leaf from the New Right, such PACs also created 'hit lists' of congressman influentially opposed to the freeze. Amid this organizing and fundraising in the spring

⁷ Since the success and financial strength of the freeze movement has stemmed in part from increasingly sophisticated use of direct mail, it is worth devoting an aside to direct mail solicitation which, along with television (divided into 'free media' and 'paid media', depending on whether journalists or copywriters have produced the material) now plays a crucial role in American political life: Typically, a group of rich individuals pur up a relatively small amount of money in a pool to finance text mailshots. A letter is drafted by a copywriter and then signed by a Big Name. Along with the letter there comes a coupon which the recipient is asked to sign, pledging loyalty to peace (or whatever the relevant cause may be) and perhaps a questionnaire. The aim is to extract somewhere between \$10 and \$25 and, as important, to get a written expression of commitment: a petition to Congress, a signature on a letter to the President, and so on. If this 'package' draws a 1.25% response it pays for itself. Punders are then encouraged to put more money into the package and tests of 5,000-10,000 give way to more substantial efforts: 200,000 or more. Depending on the returns, the package is inflected, colour of the envelope changed, words added to the letter, and so forth. The major direct mail operators (Craver, Matthews and Smith on the left; Richard Viguerie on the far right) milk master lists of five million names each. At the start of 1983 these big firms and their smaller cousins were already taking rough cuts of potential presidential candidates for 1984 and seeing how they fit with their pool of respondents. Thus Democratic strategists will soon be hearing how a Mondale or Hart sits with the crucial and volatile one-third of the electorate that John Anderson tried to appeal to in 1980 and which is now believed to be pivotal for any candidate. As defined by the direct mail shops, this constituency has the following profile: women, environmentalists and pro-freezers; average income running over \$25,000; educated; professional, non-union; homeowners; fiscal conservatives at a national level, but liberal to radical on local issues; non-interventionist in foreign policy; supporters of national parks, abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment. None of them wanted to die in a nuclear war.

of 1982, came the enormous success of Jonathan Schell's book, The Fate of the Earth. The freeze idea began to attain what could be described, in terms of the American culture and consciousness industry, as 'critical mass': object of mass media focus, topic 'A' on television programmes, teach-ins, seminars, town meetings and city council debates. Scarcely a Sunday newspaper supplement from Boston to San Francisco was without its little map of concentric bomb-impact and destruction zones, stretching from Ground Zero to the outer suburbs and beyond. Every American was told he was in Samarra.

The enormous June 12 rally in Central Park—with crowd estimates of up to 700,000—ratified the wildest dreams of those organizers who had planned it a year before to coincide with the Special UN Session (itself a bathetic affair in the midst of the invasion of Lebanon and in the wake of the Falklands grotesquerie). But if June 12 was 2 high point for the young freeze movement, its mighty turnout could not easily be traced to identifiable matrices of political or organizing power. The freeze movement is more in the nature of an extremely loose federation of local groups and the Central Park rally covered the political spectrum from freezers pure and simple to those pushing 2 much tougher political line. It was 2 coalition untested by time and by political division.

Self-Limitations of the Freeze

The freeze concept, in and of itself, has the advantages and limitations of being an extremely simple and impeccably respectable idea. It allocates no blame or praise in designating responsibility for the arms race. It simply calls for a mutually agreed end to the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. It is thus a version of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty under negotiation until suspended in 1978, with the addition of a freeze on the testing of delivery systems. There is no doubt that it would put a crimp in the arms spiral. If you cannot test a new missile you are less likely to fund it in the first place.

All the same, as critics of the movement's amiable politics have pointed out, arms limitation agreements or 'freezes' should be examined with much scepticism. They recall the 1963 ban on nuclear tests in the atmosphere, outerspace and underwater, signed by the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. It was hailed at the time as a significant step toward general disarmament and indeed helped to demobilize the disarmament movements of the time. As Seymour Melman, a longtime critic of military spending who took part in that campaign on behalf of SANE, recalls: It [the treaty] proved to be the first step towards disaster in Vietnam. President Kennedy bought off the

⁸ The California initiative posed a simple paragraph: "The people of the State of California, recognizing that the safety and security of the United States must be paramount in the concerns of the American people, and further recognizing that our national security is reduced, not increased, by the growing danger of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, which will result in millions of deaths of people in California and throughout the nation, do hereby urge that the government of the United States propose to the government of the Soviet Union that both countries agree to immediately halt testing, production and further deployment of all nuclear weapons, missiles and delivery systems in a way that can be checked and verified by both sides."

generals and civilian hawks, the military industries, and the weapons scientists by dramatically escalating the arms race on every front. The nuclear weapons crowd agreed to take their tests underground in exchange for a vastly increased level of research and testing.'

SALT treaties and proposed treaties, as is well known, have never reduced the nuclear inventory by so much as a kiloton. They have merely arranged the terms on which nuclear escalation is to be conducted. An absolute freeze would stop SALT-type escalation. And since the tritium in nuclear warheads degrades over time, a freeze on nuclear bomb production would mean that after a certain period all warheads and bombs would be duds. In a highly 'responsible' mood, Randall Forsberg noted this fact in a Scientific American article and conceded that each side should be allowed an active nuclear reactor to produce the tritium necessary to keep the bombs and warheads in usable condition. This shows what being thoughtful and sober about arms control can do to you after a while.

Melman has argued that a freeze in, say, 1986, would leave many problems unsolved. 'What have we actually frozen? Certainly not the 25,000 to 30,000 nuclear warheads in the US arsenal in 1982, when the freeze campaign began. In that year President Reagan had already set in motion plans to increase the nuclear arsenal by some 17,000 warheads which, allowing for retirement of some older warheads, would bring the total up to 40,000 or 45,000. Thus we would be freezing the arsenal at a level roughly 50–60% higher than what prevailed in 1982, which was already adequate to destroy every Soviet city of 100,000 or more population forty times over. So now we can destroy them sixty times.'

The timing of the June 12 rally highlighted another problem for a freeze movement attaching great importance to a middle-of-the-road appeal and a clean-cut image overall. A week earlier Israel had invaded Lebanon. As speakers in Central Park denounced superpower nuclear lunacy, nuclear proliferation and the menace of madmen with fingers on the H-button, Israeli planes were terror-bombing southern Lebanon and the Israeli prime minister was describing Palestinians as two-legged beasts. It did not entirely escape attention that Israel, as is now officially conceded by us intelligence agencies, had the capacity to launch a nuclear attack upon its foes; and that if one was to make a realistic estimate of which country might most easily resort to nuclear blackmail, Israel could not escape mention. ¹⁰

Shortly after the rally, Norma Becker, one of the organizers, remarked in a meeting that there was indeed a madman in the world today with his finger on the nuclear trigger and his name was Menachem Begin. The meeting rapidly degenerated into a chaos predictable to anyone familiar with taboos concerning critical discussion of Israel in the United States. Throughout the entire fighting in Lebanon, no major figure 11 in the

⁹ Scientific American, November 1982

¹⁰ See Two Minutes Over Bagbins for well-informed discussion of Israel as a nuclear power ¹¹ 'Major figure', of course, is a loose way of gesturing at the various middle-ground spokesfolk for the freeze movement. The connections were drawn by 'major figures' on the American left, notably Noam Chomsky and David Dellinger.

freeze movement saw fit to underline the ways in which the war confirmed many propositions of the campaign: the menace of proliferation; the possibility of an escalation of a regional conflict into a major nuclear 'exchange'.

The Democrats Try Co-optation

The tortured political syntax of the freeze movement was most vividly displayed at the midterm Democratic convention held in Philadelphia in June. In mainline political discussion, one cynical, but popular tendency was to regard the freeze movement as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Kennedy presidential campaign, Kennedy and Senator Mark Hatfield had already put their names on a freeze book written in a week by a couple of Kennedy speechwriters, gussied up with an introduction by Averall Harriman, and rushed out in the wake of the success of the Schell book. Since the aim of the Philadelphia gathering was to present a profile in unity, Kennedy's operatives fixed up a freeze resolution hedged with enough qualifiers to be tolerable to the hawkish Jackson wing of the party, represented at the bargaining session by Ben Wattenberg of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority. This tendency, which has the support of the conservatives on the AFL-CIO's National Executive, is four-square behind Reagan's defense budget and opposed to any attempts to curb it, whether in Congress or through arms limitation talks in Switzerland, Simultaneously the Israeli lobby drafted a resolution commending the invasion and, as a lagniappe, had it proposed by Rep. Toby Moffett, a Lebanese-American running for the Senate in Connecticut. The resolution passed without a single opposing voice. (Incidentally, both Moffett and his opponent, incumbent Lowell Weicker, announced their enthusiastic support for the freeze during the campaign, while simultaneously pledging to preserve jobs in Connecticut's large militaryindustrial complex. Moffett, like Church, was partially a victim of his own opportunism, since a significant number of voters in Connecticut felt that if he could so swiftly sell out the Lebanese, he might enjoy a similar lack of compunction where their own interests were concerned.)

In the heady aftermath of the June rally, it seemed to freeze organizers that they would carry considerable political clout in the November elections. The most notorious advocates of the arms race would be targeted, while the pro-freezers would have the advantage of enthusiastic volunteers. In September a freeze resolution failed in the House by a mere two votes. By the end of October, however, summer projections had lost some of their glow. Efforts to employ the freeze in negative political campaigns were not working very well.

In California, for example, Governor Jerry Brown, fighting for a Senate seat against San Diego Mayor Pete Wilson, launched a rv ad originally prepared for the Central Park rally. It opened with brief statements from celebrities like Leonard Bernstein ('I want to go on living'), Candice Bergen ('I want to keep on doing it all') and Tony Randall ('I just want to keep on making people laugh'). Suddenly there was the blinding flash of a nuclear explosion and then a roar as a mushroom cloud billowed into the sky. A small boy appeared. He said, 'I want to go on living.' Then a picture of Jerry Brown with voice-over: 'Pete Wilson opposes the nuclear

arms freeze. Jerry Brown supports it. Vote for your life. Elect Jerry Brown to the us Senate.' In anticipation of the ad, Wilson started running his own commercial: Wilson walking towards a group of children playing on the sand, intoning, 'We have to do better than just freeze the nuclear cloud that hangs over the earth.' Brown's strategists figured they couldn't successfully counter Wilson's call for weapons' reduction and, after a short time, the freeze ad was withdrawn.

In the end Brown lost, while the freeze resolution in California passed—although just barely with 52.5% of the vote. (Organizers in California concede that one more week of a late-surfacing anti-freeze blitz, with commercials by Charlton Heston et al, would probably have defeated it.) Elsewhere voters in 8 states approved freeze referenda, as did voters in 27 counties and cities including Chicago, Philadelphia and Denver. Only in Arizona and in 2 counties of Arkansas and Colorado was the freeze rejected. Altogether, since the freeze campaign scored its first victories in Massachusetts, the freeze has been endorsed by 307 city councils, 11 state legislatures, 61 city councils, 446 town meetings, 27 countywide and citywide votes, 9 state initiatives or referenda, and a District of Columbia plebiscite. Approximately 2.5 million Americans had signed pro-freeze petitions and 30% of the electorate had voted on the issue with no major losses.

But these results should not have been unexpected, since a New York Times poll in May had shown a groundswell of 87% of the population supporting a freeze. Freeze resolutions have become almost cognate to voting for mom and apple pie. The more important analysis is what actual impact this no-longer-silent majority has had. In terms of the outcome of the midterm congressional contests, it seems likely that just one Democrat, Bob Carr of Michigan, who had lost his seat in 1980, won because of his strong pro-freeze position. ¹² Meanwhile the Administration has tacked minimally to the wind of public sentiment. As a result, first of all, of the burgeoning peace movement in Europe, and, secondly, of pressure from NATO allies, Reagan dispatched Paul Nitze to Switzerland for negotiations over 'theatre nuclear' weapons. Edward Rowny's assignment to the START talks (as Reagan renamed the SALT negotiations) stemmed from similar European/NATO pressure, but also a result of the growing freeze public in the United States.

The New Right Tries a Witch-hunt

If one response of the Administration to the emergence of a broad pro-freeze sentiment has been to attempt to finesse it by sending negotiating teams to Switzerland, the other response was the traditional tactic of red-baiting the movement. The attack began in the spring of 1982 during the preparations for the June rally with members of the New Right claiming that the event was instigated by the Soviet Union. Since then numerous articles in magazines and papers from the Wall Street

¹² As Curtis Gans has pointed out in The Nation (1-8 January 1983), the nature of the Democratic midterm gain bears study. Ten new Democratic seats came in California as the direct result of Congressman Philip Burton's astute gerrymandering in the redrawing of district lines.

Journal through Barrons, Commentary, Conservative Digest, and American Spectator have echoed the lurid claim of the Reader's Digest's John Barron that 'the KGB helped organize and inaugurate' the freeze. 'Today the KGB is concentrating on one of the largest active measures campaigns mounted since World War II. Its objective is to secure military superiority for the Soviet Union by persuading the United States to abandon new weapons systems.'

The current witch-hunting owes much to the activities of a Georgia congressman, Larry McDonald, who has been labouring for years to establish that the liberal Institute for Policy Studies is really an outcrop of the KGB. He and late Congressman John Ashbrook co-founded the Western Goals Foundation, which tracks the names of 'radial activists' through a computer and tries to carry on the legacy of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. The 1980 landslide brought a fresh crop of New Rightists in Congress to aid McDonald and Ashbrook in their inquisition. Among them was Alabama Republican Senator Jeremiah Denton, best known for blinking out the word 'torture' with his eyelids when a prisoner of the North Vietnamese (and permitted to make a rv broadcast). Early in his Senate career Denton, advised by seasoned terror-spotters like Arnaud de Borchgrave and Claire Sterling, began to hold hearings about 'disinformation' and subversion, in a real-life follow-through on de Borchgrave's and Moss's The Spike.

In August before the freeze vote in the House, McDonald inserted material into the Congressional Record suggesting that Women's Strike for Peace and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom were actually Soviet fronts. At the same time pollster Louis Harris let slip a memo from an unnamed adviser saying that the leadership and wealthy persons financing the freeze had been infiltrated by extremists. Meanwhile Denton attacked an umbrella organization called Peace Links to which the two womens' peace groups belonged, while the Washington Post joined in editorially, urging Peace links to expel the noxious entities. Shortly thereafter the Washington Post had to climb down, revealing that it had been relying on faulty State Department records for its accusations, and piously deploring the witch-hunting of the precise sort it had been engaging in three days earlier.

But the President took advantage of the commotion to announce in Columbus, Ohio that the nuclear freeze movement was a 'group of honest and sincere people' who were being manipulated by 'some who want the weakening of America'. On November 11 he added, 'there is no question, about foreign agents that were sent to help to instigate and help create and keep such a movement going'. It turned out that Reagan was remembering something he had read in American Spectator, Commentary or Reader's Digest, and was also relying on State Department reports. The FBI's Assistant Director for Congressional and Public Affairs, Roger Young, said that the 'President's remarks are persistently consistent with what we have learned.'

In December the House Select Committee on Intelligence finally published its report on presumed Soviet disinformation and penetration of the freeze movement. 'Evidence' amounted to nothing much more

than the fact that the CPUSA had urged its cadres to get as many people as possible to the June 12 rally. Many of the allegations turned out to be ludicrous. Thus the red-baiting campaign, somewhat comically, ground to a halt. But there were two more serious consequences. First, the FBI, hard pressed to trace the hand of the KGB in the operations of the local freeze committee in Columbus, Ohio, is developing the notion that you do not necessarily have to know what you are doing to incur charges of collusion. That is, if the KGB desires the success of a freeze movement in the United States, and, simultaneously, the good citizens of Columbus strive for the success of a freeze movement, the latter are, ipso facto, pawns and dupes of Moscow whether they like it or not. Secondly, the pressure of red-baiting had led many of the immensely respectable citizens leading, or more importantly funding, the freeze movement to accept the witch-hunters' premisses even while rejecting their specific charges. By indignantly producing proof that they are not agents of the Soviet Union they have conceded the propriety of the interrogation. A natural consequence is increased alertness among respectable freeze circles towards the possibility of contamination from suspicious sources. Since the freeze movement is, in fact, a loose congerie of arms controllers and disarmers, and since the disarmers inevitably and properly contain unilateralists, the potential for red-baiting and intimidation within the freeze movement is very high.

A New Theology of Peace

As we have tried to emphasize, the freeze 'movement' is an extremely loose assemblage. If there is a leadership, it is probably the major freeze funders: a group of thirty or forty wealthy individuals who meet periodically to sort out for themselves the issues confronting the movement, to share information and to develop a unified strategy. Of this group, the Rockefeller children have probably been the most important single source of money. They are followed by liberal foundations like the Stem Fund, the Field Foundation, and so on. At one such gathering before Christmas 1982, the funders reckoned that they had disbursed about \$20 million on the freeze so far.

In institutional terms, the greatest weight is exerted by the churches especially the Roman Catholic, Methodist and Episcopal. With the collapse of much of the traditional liberal intelligentsia over the last decade, the churches have emerged as foci of resistance under Reaganism. The release on 26 October 1982 of the second draft pastoral letter on nuclear weapons by a committee of Catholic bishops was quite as momentous as the 700,000-strong rally in June and even more troubling in its implications for the Administration. The first draft of the pastoral letter ('The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response') in June had excited an angry reaction from the White House and Pentagon because of its denunciation of us nuclear deterrence strategy. To the surprise of many, the second draft, despite heavy lobby by Administration officials, was even tougher than the first. The bishops called for an immediate freeze and deep cuts in the arsenals of the super-powers. Most importantly, they emphasized that 'we are called to move from discussion to witness and action'. As the editor of the National Catholic Reporter observed, 'The bishops are, in essence developing a new theology of

peace, and calling upon the church, and society as a whole, to become engaged in the process.'

The bishops' draft letter will be revised and voted on in a national conference later this year, but major revisions are not expected. The letter specifically condemns retaliatory strikes and the use of any nuclear weapons aimed at population centres. It also denounces any first-strike use or launch-on-warning system. 'We find', the bishops write, 'the moral responsibility of beginning nuclear war not justified by rational political objectives.' They warn military personnel that it is immoral 'to carry out orders or policies deliberately aimed at killing noncombatants'. Thus the bishops repudiate the production, use and threatened use of nuclear weapons; only stopping short of the condemnation of the possession of nuclear weapons per se. Even here they issued a conditional acceptance of the deterrence system only as long as 'progress towards a world freed of the threat of deterrence' is being pursued through serious arms control and disarmament. The bishops go on to recommend unilateral us disarmament initiatives and say that, while they cannot 'at this time' require Catholics who work in weapons plants to quit their jobs, 'should we become convinced that even the temporary possession of such weapons may no longer be morally tolerated, we would logically be required to consider immoral any involvement in their manufacture'.

Nearly half of the 348 us Catholic bishops have already signed in support of the freeze. Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle, in a bold act of civil disobedience, has called on people to withhold the 50% of their federal income tax that goes to defense spending, while Bishop Leroy Matthiesen of Amarillo, Texas has set up a controversial counselling centre to encourage members of his diocese to quit a local nuclear weapons plant. Meanwhile even generally conservative religious groups are reconsidering their attitude towards the burgeoning nuclear arms buildup. Carter's pharonic plan for a mobile-based mx system in the Utah and Nevada deserts was defeated when the powerful Mormon Church joined an anti-mx coalition of ranchers and environmentalists.

The participation of the environmentalists too is an intriguing aspect of the growth of the freeze. Last October the Friends of the Earth, with the encouragement of its founder, David Brower, held a large conclave on the 'fate of the earth' in New York which drew support from the Sierra Club, the National Audabon Society and the Natural Resources Defense Council. The environmentalists, already peculiarly antagonistic towards the Administration by dint of the deeds and words of Interior Secretary James Watt, could bring the freeze not only a very substantial financial support, but, more importantly, a highly successful style of local political action, evolved over years of fighting air and water pollution, stripmining and the nuclear-power industry. On the other hand, it should be remembered that most environmentalist groups tend to be conservative and the extent to which they can be persuaded to move beyond the basic freeze resolutions is questionable.

Arms Control or Disarmament?

To understand the possible trajectory of the freeze campaign it is essential

to bear in mind two essential features of the previous mass movements of the sixties and seventies. First, from the rise of the 'New Left' in the early sixties, emphasis at the left end of the liberal constituency has been on local activism and organizing—a tendency that has remained constant throughout the civil rights, anti-Vietnam-War, environmentalist, womens' and community movements. In contradistinction to the 1930s liberals, who reposed their hopes in a strong, reforming federal government; the localists of the 1960s and 1970s, starting with 5Ds, have argued that the best hope for a left programme lies in 'grassroots' work: tenant strikes, community control of the police, democratization of the social welfate system, and so on. From this perspective the strategic political arena is local electoral politics, and these movements have acquired increasingly sophisticated ability to operate on this level. Thus last December when the lame duck Congress was voting on production funds for the MX, SANE and the United Church of Christ, together with several environmental organizations, put out phone calls to their organizers in congressional districts. (The United Church of Christ alone has activists in 200 districts.) These local contacts, in turn, saw to it that the office of each local member of congress was deluged with as many as 500 calls a week. When the congressman came home he was further confronted by delegations of citizens, asked questions about his position on the freeze at public meetings, and greeted with firm admonitions on his way to church.

The second point to keep in mind has been the developmental pattern of originally single-issue movements in the seventies. Perhaps the environmental movement is the best case in point. At its 'take-off' in 1970 it concerned itself mainly with the superficials of a cleansed environment: billboards, broken bottles along the roadside and the froth of detergents in local rivers and streams. Soon, however, the movement began grappling with the basics of energy infrastructure—fundamental to the national economy and unavoidable if restoring the environment was to be undertaken seriously. Even though the movement was and is largely made up of middle-of-the-road and essentially conservative people-its political champions have always been moderate Republicans—there was no flinching in coming to grips with the basic question of what kind of energy programme would be the most environmentally responsible: e.g., oil and natural gas, coal and synthetic fuels, nuclear power, or alternative sources. Out of this debate arose proposals such as those of Amory Lovins and Dennis Hayes for a 'soft path' energy future which projects an entirely fresh economic base for an American energy system.

The question, therefore, is whether the freeze movement can progress along the same kind of learning curve, while simultaneously deepening its grassroots implantation and participation. Already, important strategic divergencies have appeared which indicate the kinds of debates and choices the movement will have to face in the future. For example, leaders of the national freeze in late 1982 were opposed to any widening of the movement's organizing focus to include campaigns against specific weapons systems such as the MX. They want to concentrate, instead, on persuading the House to back the freeze resolution sometimes in the first half of 1983. In contrast, more militant peace groups like SANE have urged attacks on individual weapons programmes as well as calling to account

those politicians who simultaneously claim to support the freeze while endorsing components of the arms build-up.

As Raymond Williams has emphasized, to say No to nuclear weapons you have to say No to a great deal more than nuclear weapons. Fissures in the freeze will develop as arguments break out over the extent of the No required. To those advocating a measure of unilateral disarmament by the United States, such as a diminution of the 30,000 warhead nuclear arsenal by 20%, ¹³ respectable freeze leaders have reacted with a horror and outrage reminiscent of Reagan and Weinberger. And when nine Catholic activists entered General Dynamic's Electric Boat Division in Groton, Connecticut and spray-painted a Trident submarine with the words 'uss Auschwitz' and poured blood down the hatches—they were denounced by Harold Nash, co-chairperson of the southeastern Connecticut freeze committee, as vandals. 'We want to dissociate ourselves from that as much as possible', said Nash, who designed sonar equipment and torpedoes for the Navy until his retirement in 1975.

Facing 1984

The generations who came to active political maturity at the time of the civil rights drive in the early sixties, and at the time of Kent State nearly a decade later, still probably remain the active leavening in left and left-liberal organizing in the United States. The seventies, for all its low repute, was far from being a passive decade. But it is still an open question whether the freeze will remain a transitory outcrop of arms control lobbying—helping to force, at remote best, a comprehensive test ban, SALT II ratification and abandonment of mx—or whether an activist component will force it along a learning curve towards a push for broader disarmament, expanding nuclear-free zones, an end to the conventional arms build-up, and a challenge to the us world-role and the underpinnings of the military-industrial complex.

Education and resourceful leadership within the freeze and peace movements are evidently essential to such a process; but equally important are other factors: especially the growth of the European peace movement, and the way both Soviet and American leadership play their hands.

So far the Reagan Administration has been clumsy in its dealings with the freeze movement, in part because it is bitterly divided over its actual arms-control policy. A powerful faction, stretching from the cold-war Jackson/Moynihan Democrats through some conservative Republican senators to the Pentagon (especially Secretary Weinberger and Assistant Secretary Richard Perle¹⁴), remains opposed to any arms treaties with the

¹³ Actually, if the American arsenal were reduced unilaterally by a factor of 95% it would still have the capacity to destroy the Soviet Union and much of the rest of the world.

¹⁴ No future historian of the Cold War should ignore Perle. As aide to Senator Henry Jackson and source for conservative columnists such as Evans and Novak, he was through the 1970s one of the most effective and resourceful enemies of arms control. As part of Jackson's presidential strategy, he dreamt up the 1972 Jackson-Vanik Amendment which scuttled improvements in US-USSR trade relations and was a benchmark in the inauguration of the New Cold War. With the mauguration of Reagan he was rewarded with his Pentagon post.

Soviet Union and has fought to ensure that the proposals tabled in Switzerland, such as the 'zero option' (sic), remain non-negotiable and hence doomed to failure. A second faction, notably in the State Department, wants demonstrable progress in the discussions, at least to allay tensions within NATO. The two main us negotiators, Rowny and Nitze, are irreproachable cold war warriors, yet at the turn of the year both were either leaking or announcing publicly some optimism about the chances of progress: Rowny even gave a 50/50 estimate of the possibility of an arms treaty in 1983. White House aides, however, hastened to squelch such optimism. (Any analysis of forces within the Reagan high command itself would be an even more speculative operation.)

On the other hand, a \$200 billion plus deficit, consequent high interest rates and a continuing Depression will be matched by increasing pressure from Wall Street and corporate boardrooms across the country for some trimming in defense spending. As they approach 1984, Republican incumbents will undoubtedly lobby the President for more moderation in the arms spiral. Thus it could be that the reverse of the Carter/Reagan two-year transition would occur. Since it is certain that any Democrat will run on an arms control/freeze plank, 15 and likely that he will win, the chances for a serious breakthrough in the START talks may increase, as the Republicans look to guard their vulnerable flank and urge Reagan to land on election eve with a treaty in his pocket announcing 'peace in our time'.

The decision of Kennedy not to seek nomination in 1984 spared the freeze the necessity of having to decide whether to be a subsidiary of his campaign. The coming political season, however, will amply test its political and tactical agility. At the moment it is woefully slow to respond rapidly to political developments. The Administration was thus permitted a virtual monopoly of reaction and comment on the Andropov theatre nuclear proposals of late December. Part of the problem is the inchoate structure of the movement and its lack of any programme beyond the basic freeze call, as well as the conservatism and caution of most of its leadership. Public opinion in the United States is turning against increased arms spending and towards negotiation. The new Congress is more favourably disposed. The freeze has now to demonstrate whether it can do more than get everyone to agree that, in principle, peace is a wonderful thing.

¹⁵ Announced Democratic presidential candidates are: Walter Mondale, Senator John Glenn, Senator Gary Hart, Senator Ernest Hollings, Senator Alan Cranston and former Florida Governor Reuben Askew. At the moment all pay lip service to the freeze and all, except for Askew, are making protectionist noises. If Reagan shows any progress in his Middle East proposals, all will run on a "Save Israel" platform (most will anyway, whether there is progress or not). None will argue for détente. On past form, only a moderate, 'gypsy moth' Republican challenger, in a post-Reagan primary fight, would have the nerve to go for thus. There are signs that Senator Robert Dole, from the grain-exporting state of Kansas, is remodelling himself from Ford's hard right-wing 1976 running-mate to do just that

Marxism and Demography

The primary form of Marxism's traditional address to demography, dating back to Marx himself, has been through a virulent denunciation of its Malthusian versions. These polemics, however programmatically justified in countering largely reactionary Malthusian population policies, nevertheless have had an anaesthetic effect upon historical materialism—placing the demographic realm itself beyond the pale of legitimate scrutiny and investigation. In the process of dismissing Malthus and his successors, Marxists have abandoned the terrain to our enemies. And with the notable exception of some analysts of the Third World like Meillassoux, this abdication has been perpetuated within contemporary Marxism. Indeed there has been an unfortunate counterposition of the socio-economic to the demographic, as if these two dimensions of social relations were materially separable under capitalism or elsewhere, and as if the lines of causality ran, undialectically, only one way from the socio-economic and political to the demographic.

The Great Evasion

Even the best of recent Marxist historiography continues this traditional dismissal. The work of Robert Brenner, for instance, which has attracted much attention for its rigorous and original approach to the transition between the feudal and capitalist modes of production, fails to recognize the specificity of demographic causes. Brenner launched an attack in *Past and Present* on the reigning neo-Malthusian orthodoxy of Postan, Ladurie, Habukkuk and others, concerning their interpretation of the growth and stagnation of late feudal formations in Western Europe. While the critique itself has many merits, Brenner displays a tendency to deny the explanatory power of demographic phenomena in asserting the primacy of class struggle dynamics. The core of his argument is the thesis that 'it is the structure of class relations, of class power, which will determine the manner and degree to which particular demographic changes will affect long-run trends in the distribution of income and economic growth, and not vice-versa'. ²

A very subtle dislocation is revealed in this statement and persists throughout the article. Brenner turns a conflict over where to place the emphasis into an either/or counterposition. If he were merely insisting upon the primacy of class relations and the (diverse) outcomes of class struggles over demographic cyclical pressures in an overall model of feudal development, then that would be perfectly correct, particularly as it pertains to the transition to capitalism. But there is the final phrase, 'and not vice-versa', that effectively dismisses any incorporation or active feedback of demographic forces into his model of class relations and class struggle tendencies. In counterposing class relations to demographic pressures as the prime-mover of feudal economic growth and stagnation, Brenner 'over-corrects' his opponents to the extent of suppressing the autonomy of demography altogether. In this regard, it is worth quoting from Guy Bois's comment on Brenner's article in a subsequent issue of Past and Present:

It is not enough to undertake a theoretical critique of the neo-Malthusian position, or to blame its proponents for underestimating one or other level of analysis. To be convincing and decisive, the critique must attack the very kernel of Malthusian interpretation in order to separate with absolute precision the valid from the invalid elements. The whole strength of this model derives from the fact that it is amply confirmed by detailed research: the importance of the demographic factor, the succession of long-term trends, the existence of ceilings of growth, and so on. By what strange perversion of Marxism is it possible to refuse to take such firm data into account on the absurd pretext that another theoretical construction rests upon it?... Postan or Le Roy Ladurie should not be criticized for giving too much importance to the demo-

¹ Mardons, Moal and Money, London 1980.

² 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe', Part and Prismi, No. 70 (February 1976), p. 31. See also his "The Origins of Capitalist Development: a Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism', NLR 104 (July-August 1977).

graphic factor. They should on the contrary be criticized for stopping their process in midstream and for not integrating the demographic factor into the all embracing whole that is the socio-economic system.³

Bois's criticism here is, in my view, very much to the point. It could be extended far beyond Brenner's work to the entire legacy of classical Marxism.

The feminist challenge to Marxism—with which my own work is concerned—also demands that this great evasion be squarely faced. A central demand of the women's liberation movement is for women themselves to gain full control over their reproductive capacities, and intense political struggles continue to rage over this issue. As the slogan 'control of our bodies, control of our lives' suggests, women can never control their lives in a full sense until they gain control of their own biological capacities. We can state this proposition obversely: the social control of women is control upon the control of their reproductive capacities in a vast range of societies. If this generalization is valid, then the conclusion seems to me inescapable: there are compelling feminist reasons for paying close attention to the demographic regulators of women's fertility and to their change over time. And yet, there has been surprisingly little attention paid by feminists to the field of demography. Conversely (though much less surprising) demographers have largely ignored the burgeoning feminist scholarship of the past decade. Even a brief perusal of the principal English-language journals in the field (Demography, Population Studies, and Population and Development Review) will demonstrate that feminist perspectives and debates are rarely acknowledged, much less taken seriously, in their pages. One would never guess, reading these journals, that childbearing was a sex-specific and gender differentiated process.

While feminist critics of 'malestream Marxism' have sought to shift and supplement Marxism's traditional focus on 'production' with a decisive emphasis on 'reproduction', this has not been conceived in explicitly demographic terms. There has been a real breakthrough in the feminist study of mothering, together with speculative explorations of the immense implications of men's abstention from early childcare, yet little progress has been made on the closely related problem of forging a feminist analysis of the social regulation of fertility. ⁶

³ 'Against the Neo-Malthusian Orthodoxy', *Past and Present*, No. 79 (May 1978), pp. 67–68, Bois is a Marxist whose own work, *La Crise de la Feedalisme* (Paris 1976), has drawn accolades even from Ladurie. He begins his commentary by praising Brenner's attack on 'the neo-Malthusian orthodoxy'

⁴ My doctoral thems, recently completed at the University of Toronto, sketches the daily and generational reproduction cycles of labour-power through household, family and kin relations in the slave, feudal and capitalist modes of production. Therein I advance a much fuller elaboration of a revised mode of production concept than I have been able to present below, including a consideration of the question of patriarchal domestic relations.

⁵ This is Mary O'Brien's neologiam (*The Politics of Reproduction*, London 1981), I have been most fortunate to work with her at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

⁶ On mothering, cf. Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering, Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gondor, Berkeley 1978; Adrian Rich, Of Women Born, New York 1976; and

I. Theories of Demographic Transition

In this article, I want to look at the demographic transition of the mid-eighteenth to early twentieth centuries in Western Europe, and particularly at the transformation of fertility patterns in families of the labouring classes which occurred in this period as the dominant mode of production was overthrown and replaced. I find, in the works of a whole range of revisionist social historians and demographers, an emergent alternative to the dominant paradigm of the modernization school in explaining this transition. Instead of 'industrialization and urbanization', these scholars place proletarianization at the heart of their analysis. They see this as an uneven, diverse, and protracted process, culminating finally in the formation of a mass urban factory proletariat, but beginning at least two centuries before in the precipitation of a mass of rural landless labourers. Transcending the limits of orthodox Marxist accounts, they perceive the process of proletarianization as a demographic revolution as well as a revolution in the prevailing social relations of production. Their studies have highlighted the intimate dialectical relation between these two dimensions of the proletariat's formation.

The modernization paradigm has run into considerable difficulties—now widely acknowledged—in light of the wealth of new local studies of the demographic transition in Western Europe. In essence, the demographic transition theory held that in traditional societies both fertility and mortality rates were 'natural' and high, tending to counterbalance one another in the long run so that the size of a community was checked at the limits of the means of subsistence available to it. 8 In the eighteenth

Dorothy Dinnerstein, The Mermand and the Minotaur, New York 1976. For historical accounts of the public struggle over birth control, see Linda Gordon, Wannas's Body, Wannas's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America, Harmondsworth 1976; and J. Reed, From Private Vice to Public Virtue The Birth Control Movement and American Society Since 1830, New York 1978.

7 By way of introduction to a burgeoning scholarship, see: Lutz Berkner, 'The Use and Abuse of Census Data for the Historical Analysis of Family Structure', Journal of Interdisciplinary History 1975, pp. 721-38, and Inheritance, Land Tenure, and Peasant Family Structure A German Regional Comparison', in J. Goody, J. Thirak and B.P. Thompson (eds.), Family and Inberstance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200-1800, Cambridge (UE) 1976, Lutz Berkner and Franklin Mendels, Inheritance Systems, Family Structure and Demographic Patterns in Western Europe, 1700-1900', in C Tilly (ed.), Historical Studies of Changing Fortility, Princeton 1978; Rudolph Braun, Proto-industrialization and Demographic Changes in the Canton of Zurich', in Tilly, op. cit.; Michael Haines, Fertility and Occupation: Population Patterns in Industrialization, New York 1979, David Levine, Family Formation in an Age of Nascont Capitalism, New York 1977; Hans Medick, chapters 2 and 3 in Industrialization Before Industrialization, P. Kriedte, H. Medick and J. Schlumbohn (eds.), Cambridge (UK) 1981; Franklin Mendels, Proto-industrialization: The First Phase of the Industrialization Process', Journal of Economic History, 1972, 32, pp 241-61, and 'Social Mobility and Phases of Industrialization', Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 1976, 7 (2), pp. 193-216; Charles Tilly, Introduction', in Tilly op cit.; Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, Women, Work and Family, New York 1978

Natural fertility was first defined by the French demographer Louis Henry ('Some Data on Natural Fertility', Engineer Quarterly, 1961, \$, pp. 81-91) as the absence of deliberate birth control and family size limitation in marriage. The term is now in widespread use among demographers, although not without ambiguities. A population is held to be in a condition of natural fertility when, in the jargon of demographers, birth patterns show no evidence of being 'parity-dependent' Married women, in other words, do not cease to bear children on the basis of the number of presently living children they have already borne; no 'target' of ideal family size is operative. If the fertility curve of a given cohort of women corresponds

century agricultural productivity rose, breaching this limit, and as living standards gradually improved, mortality rates declined. For over a century, however, fertility rates remained at their traditional levels or declined only slightly, still caught within the cultural constraints of the old order. The population boom of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe was thus attributable to a culturally induced lag between falling death and birth rates, which was greatest among the propertyless classes. Eventually in the late nineteenth century it was presumed that the processes of industrialization, urbanization and cultural modernization propelled the great mass of the population into a new environment wherein they not only lived longer, but saw the economic rationale of implementing birth control in marriage and reducing overall family size, thus bringing fertility rates, once again, into line with mortality rates.

The main problem with this thesis is that it doesn't appear to have happened that way. Fertility rates row in many areas of the countryside in the period of early modernization and fell later on in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with rural rates often declining as steeply as urban rates. Moreover the early industrial workers usually had bigher fertility rates and larger families than the 'pre-modern' peasants in Western European towns and villages. The fertility decline in France preceded industrialization, while in Belgium and Germany the opposite occurred. In urban England the decline came later while in rural Normandy it was early and so on. So clearly, urbanization and industrialization do not correlate in any straightforward sense with the onset of the transition from relatively high fertility and mortality rates to relatively low modern rates.

The Revisionist Critique of Modernization Theory

As mentioned, in the past decade there has been a response to these difficulties by a revisionist school of social historians and demographers who appear to be heading (implicitly or explicitly as the case may be) in a critical Marxist direction. They remain dissatisfied with both the standard modernization thesis and the alternative orthodox Marxist account of the

broadly to their natural fecundity curve, even through their late thirties and early forties, a regime of natural fertility is held to prevail Customs and practices which affect birth-spacing, and hence fertility rates, but which are not parity dependent (such as breast-feeding norms and post-partum intercourse tuboos), do not contravene a regime of natural fertility. The natural/controlled dichotomy tends to generate a simple bipolar model: pre-industrial peoples have 'natural and high' fertility, while industrialized populations exhibit 'controlled' birth patterns and register 'low' fertility rates. The simplistic nature of this dichotomy, so congenial to the modernization framework, is now ritually acknowledged by demographers although it is recognized that there are tremendous variations within each. A more elaborate and manced typology has yet to be established, which would take into account that may human fertility pattern is culturally bounded and socially regulated, no population on record has been found to approach a rate of natural breeding. ⁹ The other major problem with the demographic transition theory is that it is not a theory at all in a scientific sense, since it lacks any substantial explanatory elements. Instead, it is a descriptive model of sequential change in a set of 'factors' whose covariance, submitted to various measures of statistical significance, is somehow assumed to explain itself. The persistent substitution of description for explanation is a hallmark of the modernization paradigm with which the demographic transition theory is closely allied.

transition to industrial capitalism in Western Europe. I take their principal arguments against each to be, respectively, the following:

- (1) The abatement of crisis mortality in the eighteenth century certainly made its own contribution to the decisive takeoff of population growth across Western Europe around 1750. But a use in fertility rates, together with a shortening of the inter-generational reproduction span among proletarian and proto-industrial sectors of the labouring masses (still predominantly rural), was absolutely pivotal as well. The fertility factor is wrongly down-played by modernization theorists who want to see only a linear transition from 'high pre-industrial to low industrial fertility rates'. The first major breakout from the old peasant fertility regime on the land was predominantly upwards, well before its sventual decline a century or more later.
- (2) The formation of the modern proletariat began long before the growth of the factory system in the First Industrial Revolution. While an initial proletarian mass was generated by the divorce of former peasants from the land, the primary source of the early industrial proletariat in Western Europe was rural proletarian and independent handicraft workers, not ex-peasants. It was the demographic growth of the landless rural poor (proletarian and proto-industrial—shading into one another in many cases) in the eighteenth century which established the indispensable labour supply precondition (a massive rural labour surplus) for rapid capitalist industrialization in the nineteenth century. While landholding agriculturalists fell rapidly as a percentage of the total labouring population in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, their numbers did not diminish absolutely, and their offspring were not the primary source of first-generation factory workers. The old Marxist stereotype of peasants-into-proletarians is grossly oversimplified. This distortion flows from the failure to include the demographic dimension in the overall picture of the transition from late feudalism to early industrial capitalism.

I think that the revisionist consensus (I-2m forcing a consensus here which these historians themselves might eschew as premature) is substantially correct in these two contentions. I am also of the opinion that a Marxist attention to changes in the prevailing mode of production can nevertheless provide a relevant framework for interpreting the historical data which these scholars have developed. Considering that most Marxist historiography has tended to envision the transition from feudalism to capitalism in a rather schematic, linear and teleological fashion, largely ignoring its demographic dimensions 10; it is particularly

¹⁰ While Maurice Dobb's Studies in the Development of Capitalism (Cambridge and New York 1963) certainly advanced well beyond crude schematism, his argument was nevertheless marred by the traditional Marxist counterposition of transformations in social relations of production to demographic changes (see p. 223 especially), arguing for the primacy of the former while downplaying the latter. He compounded the problem through an incautious acceptance of the then standard modernization consensus that 'the increase in population (from 1750–1850) is now known to have been due to a fall in the death-rate rather than a use in the birth-rate' (p. 257). The subsequent debate in Science & Society (printed and expanded in The Transition from Fedicalism to Capitalism, New Left Books, London 1976), while ranging fruitfully far and wide, ignored the demographic coordinates of the transition to capitalism.

significant that an important current of demographers should come to couch their explanations in broadly Marxist terms. Their empirical findings and interpretations offer an invaluable knowledge-base for more explicit and rigorous Marxist theorizations, centering on changes in the predominant mode of production through time. ¹¹

But before proceeding further, it is necessary to make two essential clarifications. First, I shall present a reworked version of the mode of production concept which integrates the production of labour-power (as a productive force) and the social regulation of its daily and generational reproduction through household, family and kin relations. Secondly, it is important to recall briefly several valid tenets of the classical Marxist analysis of population dynamics.

Reworking the Mode of Production Concept

The problem of economism which has plagued historical materialism from Marx on has been widely recognized by Marxists of diverse persuasions in the past two decades. There is a broad consensus that the original sin of economism stems from an overemphasis on the economic dimension in conceptualizing modes of production and from a reduction of their political and ideological levels to mirror reflections or derivations of the economic base. While agreeing that the consequences of economism have indeed been pernicious for Marxism, I find the standard diagnosis of this ill to be misconstrued and, consequently, also the proposed antidote. In my view, the economist error has not stemmed from an exaggeration of the weight of the economic dimension (or more correctly, the socio-economic dimension), but instead from a false narrowing of the field of the socio-economic, and a failure to conceptualize adequately the integration of the socio-economic with politico-legal relations of state and the cultural formation of groups and classes.

In short, while others have scored the reduction of superstructures to infrastructures, I focus here on the arbitrary constriction of the infrastructure itself. The 'relative autonomy of superstructures' cannot possibly compensate for a reductive infrastructure which has been left intact and unchallenged. It is not as if the old blueprints for the first floor were fine but more work were merely required on the design of the house's upper storeys. If one misconceives the field of production, then one's theorization of a mode of production is bound to go awry.

In most Marxist literature, the field of production is reduced to the production of material goods; the productive forces to the instruments of labour; and the social relations of production to those relations found at the site of goods production. In this framework, the production of the species and its labour-power simply does not appear. It is little wonder then, that feminists have criticized Marxists for elaborating the mode of production concept in a 'sex-blind' fashion.¹² For women's first

¹² See Heidi Hartman, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union", in L. Sargent (ed.), Women and Revolution, London 1981.

¹¹ The opportunity to study with David Levine has contributed importantly to my thinking here, although he should not be implicated in any of the 'synthesis' essayed in the following

production (whatever else they may produce in the way of material goods) has been consistently excluded from the conceptual field of Marxism's central theoretical category. The result of this displacement has been to assign the social organization of childbirth, infant-care and domestic socialization to the realm of Nature by default.

The Three Fundamental Productions

All human societies are necessarily involved in three interrelated productions which cannot be subsumed one to another: (I) the production of the means of production; (II) the production of the means of subsistence; and (III) the production of labour-power on a daily and a generational basis. These three productions may be organized in a variety of ways. It is the task of concrete investigation in each case to identify their articulation in particular modes of production and in specific social formations. Moreover, whereas a mode of production is conventionally defined as a particular set of productive forces in combination with, and in (latent or manifest) contradiction to, a specific ensemble of relations of production; I am insisting that this forces/relations combination must be conceptualized for all three productions. This statement is uncontroversial for I and II, but is regarded as suspect for III. Yet if one takes labour-power seriously as a productive force in all modes of production, the question of the specific relations within which it is produced and reproduced must be centrally addressed. And if we reject all naturalist complacency, then we must analyse in detail those historically specific social relations which regulate fertility—the infrastructure of the generational reproduction of labour-power. The specific fertility regime of major classes, in other words, must figure as an integral component of the full theorization of the mode of production in question.

The problem of the generational replacement of labour-power is an absolutely critical one in two ways. First, all societies must establish an overall relation between the schedule of labour-power's consumption in production and its demographic replacement through the medium of its small domestic groups. The way in which this relation is regulated (and upset) furnishes an important insight into the dynamics of the society as a whole. Secondly, the position of women in any society is closely bound up with the gender construct of wife/motherbood. How does a particular society deal socially with the biological fact that women bear children and lactate and men do not? Since this is a pre-eminently social question, it requires an historically specific explanation.

What then constitutes the social relations of labour-power's daily and generational reproduction? Here we are confronted with the question of the family. Definitions of 'the family' in the social sciences, reflecting ambiguities in colloquial usage, have oscillated between reference to kinship-at-large (relations by blood and marriage) and co-habiting kin (related persons living together 'under one roof'). The problem, widely recognized in the past decade, is one of multiple and shifting referents, with household and family often being used interchangeably. As a result of this critique, it is now common in family studies to uphold a bousehold family distinction. This settles one ambiguity, but a further one remains: 'family' still covers both the kin co-residence group and kinship filiation more broadly.

Household, Family and Kinship

I will therefore suggest a tripartite distinction between household, family and kinship, where the intermediate term—the family—is assigned the restricted meaning of the core kin group which is normally co-resident through various phases of the domestic cycle. It is recognized that bousehold family kin (blf/k) relations may organize more than the third production of labour-power outlined above. In many modes, they are integral to the production of the means of production and subsistence as well. But at the very least, we can state that blf/k relations do organize the primary production of labour-power in all societies, though they may not do so exclusively: under capitalism, for example, the school system plays a major role. How then are the coordinates of a particular fertility regime set within the context of household, family and kin relations? I shall outline a simple four-step model conceived at the relatively abstract level of a mode of production, which then takes on additional complexity in the study of particular types of social formations in specific stages of their development.

The first step is for potentially reproductive couples to achieve a social status and an economic condition in which they are able to bear children—to get married and secure a minimally stable household space wherein childbearing may occur. (For the moment we leave aside 'illegitimate' fertility, usually unintended, and assume, for the vast majority of the population, the need to surpass these social and economic limits before partaking in childbearing. We include those conceptions—technically 'illegitimate'—where a couple marries upon discovery of pregnancy. At this initial level, we endeavour to specify the prevailing rules and conditions of marriage and household formation which are specific to a given mode of production and to a particular class relation to the means of production and subsistence. These parameters demarcate a segment of the potentially reproductive population 'at risk'.

Within the population which is in a position to have children, we need to specify a second step: the particular balance of short and long-term costs and potential benefits which generate a basic incentive structure for having children. Once again, we can identify key variables: positive incentives such as the demand and utility of child labour as a potential contribution to the household, more than offsetting the additional upkeep costs of an extra member; the need, or the cultural desire, to perpetuate the family line beyond death through inheritance; the utility of children as a 'pension fund'—a form of old age security. On the other side, there are disincentives: the costs of bearing additional members and feeding them (spread out over the anticipated duration of their stay within the unit) and the hazards and hardships to mothers from further childbearing. ¹⁴ (Whether this gender-specific disincentive is suppressed

¹³ The biological limit-condition of fecundity, of course, operates also and fluctuates over time and living conditions, but we treat this as a precondition to these social and economic constraints.

¹⁴ This incentive structure is established for reproductive couples at the level of the household as a pooling-sharing unit; this is the unit that assumes the costs of its dependant members, and stands to benefit from the eventual contribution of children. The specification of this incentive structure in no sense implies, as human-capital theorists do, that the interests of both partners are harmoniously aligned within the unitary household framework. Clearly the costs and potential benefits of children are not symmetrically bone, women's interests are regularly submerged—sacrificed 'for the sake of the family'. It is important to specify this interior alignment without losing sight of the unitary household framework.

or is permitted room to operate will depend on the form and degree of patriarchal dominance with family households.) Furthermore, operating both for the unit as a whole and for women specifically, there are attractive alternative uses of their time and labour capacities which weigh against childbearing. Thus incentive structures may vary greatly both between and within particular modes of production.

A third element then enters the picture: the cultural conditions shaping the relation of marital sex to procreation. Here we are looking at prevailing relations between spouses and at the institutions of a given community which have a strong impact on the conduct of marital sexual relations. The strongly patriarchal character of the European peasant family in the medieval and early modern periods, for example, fortified by the Augustinian doctrine of the Church, made it virtually inconceivable for peasant women to deliberately practice any form of contraception in marriage. It was thus rare for women of this class and period to cease childbearing much before menopause, even when they had reached what might have been an ideal family size in economic terms.

Finally, a fourth step: the means available, given the will to do so, to limit and shape fertility according to the couple's or the wife's desires. Availability refers here to both the technical means of birth control at hand and the practical knowledge of their effective use, disseminated within the cultural constraints outlined in step three. Steps three and four vary within a range delimited by the mode of production according to its development over time and space. Moreover, we assume (given the ubiquity of the sex drive and heterosexual intercourse) that the total number of conceptions in a population will tend to exceed those desired within a given incentive structure, and this unintended surplus will be greater, the more imperfect are the means at hand. The opposite disparity between intention and result (where children are desired but cannot be produced or do not survive) also operates, but I estimate here—at least for the populations we are dealing with—that 'disappointments' are outnumbered by 'surprises'. A given fertility pattern then is taken to be 'rational' (i.e., reflecting a given incentive structure) within the economic and cultural constraints existing except for a small but variable excess which is the surplus product of unintended conception and deterred marriage, and which assumedly would be reduced if effective and safe birth control were readily available. (I reiterate, that 'availability' is not only a technical but also a cultural condition.)

Both the social relations of production and the productive forces at hand (in the expanded definition) enter into the fertility equation outlined here, and we must identify in each case their particular complimentary or contradictory combination. This implies that the fertility dynamics of a given labouring class in a given mode of production cannot be read off as a single configuration of fertility forces, but rather should be conceived as a variable range within a set of limit-conditions. These limits are established by the relation of households to the basic means of production and subsistence, which structures the step one parameters within which a specific fertility regime develops. If these limits are breached, then the class relation itself is dissolved and some other mode of production has been entered.

Classical Marxism and 'Laws' of Population

In Capital Volume I, Marx writes: 'Every special historic mode of production has its own special laws of population...' This stands today as a bald assertion which subsequent generations of Marxists have never elaborated upon or sought in any sustained study to substantiate. In a moment, I shall endeavour to mobilize it as a guiding hypothesis in making sense of the demographic transition of Western Europe, but first it is necessary to spell out several of its implications.

We should understand here by 'laws' of population what Marx means by laws in other contexts in his political economy: a set of persistent and long-run forces and tendencies which never operate purely or unimpeded in the real world, but which persist nonetheless as long as the mode of production is in place. We are not then speaking of 'a law' in the sense of a set of forces which guarantee in diverse settings a uniform outcome. We are speaking of a characteristic interplay of forces and relations of fertility and mortality which allows for developments within a given mode as well as entailing discontinuities in transitions from one mode to another. Moreover, it is important to note that Marx's assertion, quite consistent with his entire orientation to political economy, upholds the cardinal principle of bistorical specificity for each mode of production and each epoch in history, rejecting any natural or eternal law of human population growth or overpopulation. He makes this point explicitly while polemicizing with Malthus. It is one that we shall want to uphold, as a first principle, in historical inquiry into particular population patterns.17

Applying the principle of historical specificity to household forms and fertility regimes, we generate the following methodological guideline: different modes of production will entail different b[f]k configurations and fertility regimes. This does not mean that every element in the domestic ensemble is unique to a given mode, but only that the whole structure—the arrangement of elements—is historically unique: specific to a given mode and to social classes within the mode. This also means that the aggregate population result—the balance of fertility, migration and mortality—might be similar in societies where different modes of production dominate, but that the way this result was generated would be markedly different in each case.

The principle of historical specificity as applied to population dynamics

¹⁵ Moecow 1954, p. 592.

¹⁶ John Caldwell has recently advanced a bold perspective which integrates the demographic dimension into a revised mode of production concept, see: "Toward a Restatement of Transition Theory', Psymiatron and Development Review, 1976, 2 (3-4), pp 321-66; and 'A General Theory of Fertility: Conditions of High Stable Fertility and the Nature of De-stabilization', ibid, 1978, 4 (4), pp 555-77. His basi/imperstructure paradigm is aharply at odds with my concept of an expanded infrastructure and readers are urged to compare the two. (I shall not do so, having discovered Caldwell's work after this article was

¹⁷ It is important to acknowledge, however, that Marx did not consistently uphold the principle of historical specificity with regard to population patterns in *Capital*, but often slipped back into the naturalist discourse which he criticized Malthus for Cf. Volume One (Moscow 1954), pp. 537, 594 and 600

surpassed its pre-plague peak of the fourteenth century.) The term 'homeostatic' may well be misleading for this was not any placid equilibrium, but a continuous process of equilibration of disruption, crisis and rectification—where mortality crises periodically decimated the - rural masses and, in their wake, fertility rates increased in response to the eased availability of anable land and earlier age at marriage. Nevertheless, the normal check to population growth was not exerted through wars. epidemics and famine, but rather through the control of fertility. primarily via the delay and deterrence of marriage. In periods of non-crisis mortality, when the land situation was generally tight, the average age of women at first marriage rose (into the late twenties in most regions) and checked fertility rates. In this characteristically Western European marriage pattern the average age of women at first marriage was around 26 years, at least 10% of women never married, and only 2% of children were born out of wedlock. 21 The delay and deterrence of marriage itself was thus the primary regulator of fertility in the villages of Western Europe; effective birth control within marriage was relatively weak or absent.

We shall return to look at this fertility regime more closely in a moment. Here I merely want to emphasize that this was not a regime of uncontrolled fertility. When demographers speak in sweeping terms of a transition from 'natural and high fertility' to one of 'controlled and low fertility', these loose descriptive labels mask the fact that: (a) there was nothing particularly natural about 'natural fertility', and (b) the early modern peasant fertility regime was relatively low compared to the proletarian and proto-industrial regimes in the same period.

The Great Population Explosion

The growth rate of the population of Western Europe began to accelerate around 1750, doubling by 1800. It was the sustained nature of this boom, without offsetting cyclical contractions, which distinguished it from all previous growth spurts. In a century and a half the population of Europe more than trebled, swelling to 400 million by 1900 despite the exodus of some 40 million people—mostly to the Americas—in the largest inter-continental migration in history.

Historical demographers have long argued whether declining mortality or rising fertility furnished the driving force in this unprecedented vital revolution in Western Europe.²² Swept up in the dynamic of polarized debate, most have plumped for the unilateral role of one factor, while minimizing or denying outright the contribution of the other. I have seen no compelling evidence or argument thus far presented to enter the lists

²¹ Daniel Scott Smith, 'A Homeostatic Demographic Regime: Patterns in West Buropean Family Reconstitution Studies', in R.D. Lee (ed.), *Population Patterns in the Past*, New York 1977.

<sup>1977
22</sup> In the past decade, the prevailing view has strongly favoured declining mortality as the prime factor, with the centre of controversy shifting to an explanation of this fall (i.e. improvements in medicine, climate, or living standards and nutrition). Wrigley and Schofield's The Population History of England, 1341-1871 (Cambridge (Mass.) 1981) will surely break up the mortality consensus, for England at least. They estimate that England's population boom in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was largely due to rising fertility, with earlier and more universal marriage being the proximate cause (pp. 242-47)

also entails a rejection of any demographic study which abstracts rates of fertility and mortality away from the specific social structure of the community which is being studied. As Marx writes in Grandrisse. Population is an abstraction if I leave out, for example, the classes of which it is composed ... [population, in abstraction] is a chaotic conception of the whole.' 18 Lenin subsequently took up this polemic in What the Friends of the People Are For. It remains a perfectly valid point and a telling indictment of a great deal of contemporary demography, which is still involved in just such abstraction despite a growing awareness within the field of the problematic nature of macro-aggregation devoid of detailed historical and structural specification.

If we take Marx's assertion in Capital seriously that specific modes of production have their own characteristic population dynamics, it seems to me that we are committed to two corollary propositions in order to be consistent with the methodology of historical materialism: (1) The principal determinations of population dynamics are endogenous to each mode of production and we should seek to locate them there, in its inner-workings. (2) We should also postulate that population forces will periodically come into contradiction with themselves and with other elements of any given socio-economic system, and will tend to make their own contribution to the developmental propulsion of particular modes through time and space, and ultimately to their revolutionary transformation. I state this as an initial hypothesis consistent with the theoretical tenets of historical materialism, but it also appears to receive a compelling empirical confirmation in history. The two greatest revolutions of the productive forces in history are arguably the Agricultural Revolution (when nomadic foragers began to sedentarize, turn the soil, sow and reap) and the Industrial Revolution (when mass machinery replaced hand-powered tools as the dominant means of production). In both of these decisive and irreversible watersheds, it seems that sharp disruptions in earlier population patterns occurred in the gestation phase, immediately prior to sweeping changes in the technology at hand. In both cases, the resulting rapid population growth apparently furnished its own accelerators in the build-up of revolutionary momentum, effecting a transition from one mode of production to another. 19

II. Contours of the Demographic Revolution

In very broad terms, what were the outlines of the demographic transition in Western Europer²⁰ Until roughly 1750 (our perception gets dimmer, of course, the farther back we look), the great peasant populations of Western Europe appear to have lived and laboured within a homeostatic regime of demographic checks and balances, so that population growth, in the long run, was very slight. (It is doubtful whether the population of Europe in the early eighteenth century had yet

18 New York 1973, p. 100.

¹⁹ On the Neolithic Revolution, see M.N. Cohen, The Foods Crisis in Probistory: Overpopulation and the Origins of Agriculture, New Haven 1977.

²⁰ I concentrate here exclusively on the mass labouring classes leaving the aristocracy and the bourgeouse to one side. I do not assume that the labouring classes followed the ruling classes in altering their fertility patterns so much as they changed for their are socio-economic reasons.

for either camp. Certainly mortality crises declined on the European continent in the eighteenth century with a decrease in the ferocity and frequency of wars, famines and epidemics. (Mortality rates in normal non-crisis years, by contrast, did not decline much before the second half of the nineteenth century.) Local family-reconstitution studies also indicate, fairly consistently, that age-specific fertility rates rose among those swelling sectors of the rural landless who were engaged in cottage industry and year-round wage labour. So changes in both vital rates would appear to have contributed to the demographic revolution. How then do we weigh their respective effects and assess their interaction?

No real progress can be achieved in this regard until national aggregates for crude birth and death rates are broken down, and specific socio-economic regions of Western Europe are distinguished and compared, highlighting the demographic dynamics of the main (labouring) classes in each region.²³ In surveying the relevant literature, the following patterns seem to me to emerge for three distinct types of socio-economic regions of Western Europe: the great pre-industrial cities, the rural-agricultural zones, and the new industrial areas.

(1) The old pre-industrial commercial and administrative centres and capital cities of Europe had generally been net consumers of population throughout the medieval and early modern epochs with mortality rates far higher than the surrounding countryside; urban influx checked overall population growth on the continent at least until the eighteenth century. Life expectancy improved slightly in the eighteenth century, tending by the end of the century to balance the reproductive equation, but the old urban centres did not become dynamic sources of indigenous population

²³ Beyond local reconstitution studies, most historical demographers have accepted nation-states and their legal subdivisions as appropriate units of aggregation and analysis. The compilation of routinely generated statistics by government offices virtually compels the adoption of state-territorial units, at least as a first step. For most of the Western European states, viable demographic data exist from the mid-nineteenth century on. The Office of Population Research at Princeton University under the direction of Analey Coale has sponsored an especially important set of studies on declining fertility rates in Europe, with different scholars adopting standard measures and common criteria in evaluating the demographic record of the various states. National estimates for earlier periods have been developed by ingenious but still very problematic methods of aggregating and weighing local family reconstitution studies, with data generated in turn from a great variety of local sources, originally recorded by officers of church and state. Schofield and Wrigley's long-awasted The Population History of England is technically a tour de force which will undoubtedly stand for many years as a pre-eminent exemplar of quantitative reconstruction for the centuries prior to the inception of nationally uniform record-keeping. But larger conceptual problems persist, which no amount of technical sophistication and ingenuity can resolve. For the Princeton type of historical demography adopts national and provincial units of analysis without any sustained attempt to generate regional and class breakdowns on the basis of relevant socio-economic categories. The multi-class and mixed-region totals which are compiled, statistically manipulated and interpreted, inevitably mask structural variation along these lines. The result is an excessive preoccupation with national comparisons ('the French versus the English pattern'). Class and regional variations are generally treated as an afterthought in a lead and lag framework which is implicitly premissed on a conservative cultural diffusionist assumption, lower classes and backward regions lag behind their superiors, but eventually follow them on the road to modernity and progress It is to the credit of the revisionist social historians mentioned earlier that endogenously active class and regional dynamics have at least been highlighted in many local studies. International aggregations and synthetic interpretations based on regional and class axes have yet to be published in the English-language literature, although see Heines (op. cit.) for an international study based on job categories.

growth much before the second half of the nineteenth century when a minimal infrastructure of running water, sewage and garbage disposal was finally established in the teeming slums of these cities, with dramatic improvements in the life expectancy of the labouring poor. Thus before 1850 the main sources of population growth cannot be found in the great cities—their expansion was due almost entirely to in-migration.

- (2) From the Middle Ages, the agricultural zones of the European countryside had been the primary source of population growth on the continent. Age-specific fertility rates among peasants, cottars and day labourers in agricultural villages do not appear to have risen much, if at all, from 1750 to 1850, and in some regions (e.g., parts of France) they definitely fell. The abatement of crisis mortality in the same period meant that a significantly higher proportion of married adults survived their reproductive years. The decline of mortality thus appears to be the primary factor in triggering the population boom in these regions among the agriculturally-based labouring classes.
- (3) By far the fastest growing regions of Western Europe in the first century of the demographic transition were those rural areas where cottage industry mushroomed and new factory and mining towns sprang up. The primary contributor to the unprecedented population boom of these regions appears to have been a substantial rise in fertility rates.

The Proto-Industrial Rupture

The marital fertility rate of any population can be broken down into three age-specific averages: (a) women's age at first birth (starting); (b) intervals between births (spacing); and (c) age at last birth (stopping). The main difference between the fertility of the proletarianizing populace of the new industrial regions and the population of other regions appears to have been in this first factor. There was a decrease of two to three years in the average age at first marriage, a concomitant lowering of women's age at first birth, and an increase in the number of births per completed marriage. The proportion of the population ever marrying also rose, as did the frequency of childbirth out of wedlock. These changes, in combination, increased the birth rate of women under 25 dramatically. (In peasant villages, by contrast, this rate remained very low.) As a result, the average generational turnover period was abbreviated, and the demographic expansion of one generation was compounded more rapidly by the next.

Average intervals between births also appear to have shortened slightly with proletarianization, but this compensation for increased infant and child mortality in the new industrial towns probably did no more than to offset the latter's rise. The average age of working-class women at last birth remained close to menopause and did not fall much before the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In short, it was changes in the age and frequency of marriage itself which played the pivotal role in inaugurating the new proletarian fertility regime.

While adult mortality may have improved slightly among proletarian populations, infant and child mortality rates certainly did not, remaining

significantly higher than those in adjacent agricultural regions (at comparable levels of poverty) throughout the first century of the demographic transition. We cannot then plausibly attribute indigenous population growth in these regions to declining mortality rates; rising fertility appears to be much more significant.

Mass migration from agricultural to industrial regions was the other major factor in the population build-up of the latter. The growth of proto-industrial zones interrupted and detoured the old rural-urban migration pattern. The great cities ceased to absorb and to decimate the entire surplus of the countryside as they formerly had; new industrial regions became the primary catchment areas for the poor and unemployed of the agrarian areas. A very large proportion of this influx was of young adults of marriageable age, moving away from parental controls and the cultural constraints of village communities. This type of migration thus accentuated the differentiation of fertility patterns between regions, accelerating the shift to earlier and near-universal marriage in the new zones of nascent industrial capitalism. After more than a century of population boom in Western Europe, fertility rates finally began to decline sharply, falling from an annual average of 35 births per 1000 population in 1870 to only 20 by 1930 (closing the gap with mortality rates which were still declining in this period, but much more slowly than previously).24

III. Household Forms and Fertility Regimes

Let me now indicate, in a very stark and admittedly schematic fashion, how the expanded mode of production framework may be effectively mobilized in explaining the demographic transition for the main labouring classes in Western Europe. I shall do this by setting out four basic household types, each with a distinctive fertility regime.²⁵

²⁵ Within the space constraints of this article, I am dealing with immense and variegated classes as unitary social blocs, as if there were a single fertility regime for each class. Reality, of course, is more complicated, but such complexity need not defeat the conceptual framework outlined here. Consider the question of richer and poorer strats within the peasantry and the proletanist: Under the ancient region, the richer strats of the peasantry, with more land and a greater need for family labour-power, tended to have larger families than

²⁴ France was the exception to this pattern; its national fertility rate was in decline for at least a century before the rest of Western Europe. There have been many attempts to account for France's precounty in this regard. My hunch is that it was due to the peculiar uneveness of the bourgeois revolution in France, which was uniquely advanced on the political and cultural fronts while being relatively backward in socio-economic terms. The French peasantry remained firmly ensconced on the land throughout the nineteenth century and the rate of proletarianization was relatively slow. As a result, the prolific capacity of the rural masses, damned up by the land-niche system of the sakes regime, was not unleashed in the way that it was elsewhere, most notably in England. On the other hand, the French Revolution profoundly altered the culture and consciousness of the toiling masses, urban and rural, reaching deep into the peasantry. Cultural modernism and a particular form of secular rationalism took root in the French countryside almost a century before the advent of universal schooling. French peasants began to practice birth control in marriage on a widespread basis (with the tacit acquiescence of village priests) long before peasants or prolemans did elsewhere in either Protestant or Catholic countries. Since France's fertility began to decline earlier than in other countries of Western Europe, its transition to low fertility was a gradual and protracted process, however, it should be noted that fertility rates in France did fall considerably (22%) in the 1870-1900 period when rates in other nations were beginning their more rapid descent.

- (1) A peasant household, dominant before the transition gets underway, which is still part of the feudal-seigneurial mode of production, now on its last legs. The primary mode of fertility regulation in the peasant village is the 'land-niche/late-marriage system' or what has been called the 'nuptiality valve'. This is not, overall, a secular growth regime.
- (2) The proto-industrial household of domestic cottage industry, based on independent commodity production—a distinct, necessarily subordinate, but often widespread mode of production—which mushroomed across the countryside of Western Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries during the protracted transition to industrial capitalism. 26 The fertility regime operative here has been termed a 'demographic hothouse'—a system of mmediated short-run nuclear family labour demand, where the long-run intergenerational regulation of land inheritance has been overrun in the turn to non-agrarian commodity production. The proto-industrial household tends to give rise to large families, in good times and bad, contributing to impetuous net population growth.
- (3) The early proletarian family household, found primarily in rural areas or in new industrial towns, with most of its members not engaged in factory production (until late in the nineteenth century when we are passing into the phase of sharp fertility decline and out of this type). I shall follow Tilly and Scott here in terming this arrangement 'the family wage economy', where the contribution of children's wages was indispensable to the unit's stable maintenance. 27 The fertility regime here is one of mediated short-run family labour demand (mediated, that is, by conditions in the labour market), and the overall trend is to fairly rapid population growth, but effected critically by the employment situation (for men, women and children—each distinctively) and real wage levels, hence fluctuating upwards, depending upon these market conditions.
- (4) The mature proletarian household: whose primary male breadwinners were mainly concentrated in fully capitalist industries—mines, mills and factories of intensive machinofacture; whose children were now overwhelmingly in school, at least until their teenage years; and whose married women were primarily confined to domestic labour (mostly wage conversion for family consumption, not domestic manufacture), especially through their childbearing years. This is a fertility regime of parity-dependent in-marriage birth control, though stopping in the early

small-holders, cottains and day labourers. If a change in the mode of production makes a significant difference then one would expect to find a very different pattern for the proletarist under capitalism; and, indeed, an opposite pattern prevails. Poorer couples, with an urgent stake in their children's prospective wages, tended to bear more offspring, while the better-paid strata of artisans, clerks and (later) office workers typically raised smaller families. Even patterned variations between strats within a class are class-specific phenomena and are best elucidated within a conception of social classes based in a given mode of production.

²⁶ The term 'proto-industrial' was Mendel's coinage (see Proto-industrialization: The First Phase of the Industrialization Process', Journal of Economic History, 1972, 32, pp 241-66) and has since become a standard designation for cottage industry. I assume here that proto-industrial zones were organized predominantly on the basis of simple commodity production operating within an overarching formation dominated economically by merchant capital. As transitional forms, many areas of cottage industry bore relations of production that were already capitalist in a primitive sense in the eighteenth century.

²⁷ See Tilly and Scott, Women, Work and Family, op. cit.

thirties, where there are no longer economic incentives to have large families, based on children's prospective labour contributions to the family unit. Let us now consider each of these household types in turn.

Peasant Households

The households of the peasant village reproduced themselves from one generation to the next within a fairly closed system. They were involved, predominantly, in mixed subsistence farming for direct use and local barter, where surplus was sold to pay the rent, and not primarily to reap a profit. And while peasant families, through the male line, had effective possession of their means of agrarian production (above all the land), they were not yet completely free from seigneurial jurisdiction, traditional law and manorial custom. Their lands, particularly central arable parcels, were not freely and permanently alienable as commodities through market exchange, and local inheritance laws and customs still set the basic limits within which peasant househeads strategized inheritance options for devolving their patrimony. Peasant children reaching biological adulthood had to bide their time and wait for their elders to play their marital cards. Alternative livelihoods—sufficient to go off and form one's own household without parental approval—were few and far between; or at least far enough removed from the world of the peasant community to be unknown by, or intimidating to, village youth. In this situation, village endogamy (broadly defined to include neighbouring hamlets) prevailed, and most marriages had to await the availability of a land parcel (including livestock and farm implements) to be formalized and consummated.

Delayed marriage left a lot of young adults at loose ends for a limited span of years, and the peasant village regulated this residual population through the institution of domestic service, continually redistributing young adults en masse to the more productive holdings in the local area. As servants, they lived in the households of their social superiors and came directly under their control. This was an appendage of the patriarchal system and not an alternative to it. The limits of land availability, assigned marriage and inheritance customs, thus determined the pace of new household formation, and the vast majority of young adults preferred to wait to secure their own independent households rather than to marry and move in with parents (usually his).

Inheritance customs varied from one region to another, so it is difficult to generalize, but the actual forces in play varied somewhat less than the law. Peasant heads and seigneurs both overwhelmingly agreed that it was desirable, above all, to keep the main land parcel—the major means of production—intact, avoiding its subdivision wherever possible. But weighing against the goal of land integrity was the keenly felt need to compensate non-heirs, especially to marry off daughters with dowries suitable to their station. It was therefore necessary to accumulate a form of chattel or monetary wealth, above and beyond the basic holding, to compensate non-heirs and effectively exclude them from subsequent claim upon the patrimony. This is what I shall call a de facto inheritance system of compensatory impartible which tends to emerge 'between' the two pure forms of partible and impartible inheritance in conditions of seigneurial jurisdiction.

This then is a very rough sketch of the late feudal village of dependent peasant cultivators. Since marriage here was tied to the limited availability of arable land by virtue of patriarchal control and the relative absence of alternatives, and neo-locality was the norm, marriage was characteristically late and non-universal. The primary mode of fertility regulation in these circumstances was at the first level outlined above: where marriage itself was blocked and delayed, and women, on average, bore no children for the first twelve to fourteen years of their fertile life-phase, until their mid or late twenties. This then was the nuptiality valve, eased or tightened in relation to the availability of land (or alternative employments—more and more prevalent in the eighteenth century).

The incentive equation within marriage (patriarchally biased by patrilineal concerns) initially weighed strongly in favour of having children to work on the farm, to inherit the holding (males preferably), and to care for parents in old age. But not too many children; since all those who were not in line to inherit the land constituted an eventual drain upon its chattel wealth, compelling the provision of dowries and other forms of pre-mortem inheritance. However, with the means of birth control being rudimentry and culturally discouraged or forbidden, it was difficult for couples to stop reproducing in their mid and late thirties, when they had reached what they might have regarded as an ideal family size. Birth spacing was easier to manage, and was in evidence in many areas; at the will of women—one assumes—insisting on abstinence, or through

²⁶ J Hajnal in a seminal article ('European Marriage Patterns in Perspective', in *Pepalatina in History European Historical Dimography*, D.V Glass and D.E.C. Eversely [eds.], London 1965, pp. 101–43) first identified a distinctive Western European marital pattern characterized by late (23 years and over) and non-universal (90% or less) marriage. He detected such a pattern west of a line from Trieste to Leningrad as far back as the seventeenth century, to the east, marriage occurred somewhat earlier and was more universal. Subsequent research has tended to confirm Hajnal's findings, while bending his line of demarcation somewhat to include Estonia and Poland in the eastern region. As one would expect, different marriage patterns are bound up with divergent norms of household formation, co-residence and inter-generational wealth transfer. While in the West, neolocality prevailed and nuclear family households were the norm, in the East, patrilocality was customary in many regions and compound family forms of co-residence and co-operative production were commonplace.

It is unclear whether the Western European marriage pattern originated in the Middle Ages or was a product of later developments. It may well have been coincident with a distinctive manorial infrastructure comprised of the three-field strip system and nucleated village settlement, coupled with a strong tendency to local endogamy. Michael Mitterauer and Richard Seider (The European Family Patriersby to Partnership from the Middle Ages to the Present, Oxford 1982) posit that 'extensive changes in the agrarian structure brought about by the colonizing movement of the High Middle Ages were confined precisely to those areas in which the European marriage pattern and corresponding family forms developed' (p 38) The East/Wast difference in marital norms and family forms was probably related to the differentiation in prevailing modes of seigneurial exploitation, originating in the generalized crisis of the feudal order in the fourteenth century. While labour services on the lord's demesne tended to be commuted to product and money rents in the West, in Eastern Europe the corvée persisted. These divergent trends in the mode of exploitation appear to have fostered different patterns of land/labour-power equilibration. In the East, land tended to be redistributed around cyclical fluctuations in the size and dependency ratio of the co-resident family group, land integrity being safeguarded through the vertical extension of this group. In the West, land integrity was maintained through the delay and deterrence of marriage, and the labour-power of youth was redistributed between farmsteads through the institution of domestic service.

prolonged lactation and active nursing, much more than the sexual self-discipline of men.

Proto-Industrial Households

Proto-industrial households mushroomed in the eighteenth century in regions of the countryside of Western Europe where the soil was poor and subsistence farming had, by itself, become unviable. ²⁹ Wherever an urban center was within marketable distance and merchant capitalists were attentive to the possibilities of exploiting cheap domestically-based rural labour, then cottage industry sprang up, filling in the slack time of the year when the labour demands of agriculture were practically nil. This was a mixed livelihood, and the integration of subsistence farming and domestic handicraft production for supralocal markets was particularly tight. But, as time went on, the commodity production side of the household enterprise became increasingly dominant. We have, consequently, households dominated by the requisites of independent family production for the market—a new mode of production.

Not surprisingly, one finds an entirely different fertility regime. The imperative of land integrity has been weakened, since the household's livelihood was not primarily dependent on the land (and the size of the land parcel) anymore. Farming increasingly came to resemble extensive gardening, as smaller plots sufficed. The means of independent production were now mobile, as they became increasingly detached from the land, and a new household could be set up in business by a merchant and a loan. Patriarchal control over one's offspring was correspondingly weakened. The institutional constraints of the first level were thus dramatically eased, and age at first marriage dropped; moreover, the cost/incentive structure was tilted heavily in favour of childbearing since the labour supply was now strictly familial. 30 Servants and day-labourers were generally not prevalent as supplementary hands in these households. People were simply too poor to afford to pay wages; domestic service dried up when the age at marriage dropped, and parents could no longer control its timing and mate selection. The loss of parental control over marriage was not a disincentive to childbearing; the children of cottage handicraft workers tended to remain as productive members of their parents' households longer than peasant offspring, establishing their own households immediately, usually via marriage, when they did leave.

²⁹ Note here how changes in the dominant mode of production profoundly alter settlement patterns and densities. Throughout the Middle Ages in the feudal-manorial zones of the European countryside population built up on the best arable, and then extended out onto marginal lands in smaller and sparcer settlements. In the early modern era, as simple commodity production under the sponsorship of mercantile capitalism mushroomed in the countryside, population tended to build up most heavily on the poorest arable, overflowing into the new industrial towns nearby. The population density pattern was thus completely inverted in the transition from feudalism to capitalism.

³⁰ In the traditional agrarian villages, artisans tended to marry earlier than peasants, but not as early as their counterparts in open proto-industrial villages or new towns (Medick, op cit, pp. 85–86). In this sense, they stood 'in between' the peasant and proto-industrial patterns being presented here. This is a simple illustration of the general principle that one should never isolate class relations from regional context in analysing household forms and fertility regimes. The prevailing mode of production operative in a region always conditions the dynamics of subadiary modes and does not permit their full developmental logic to unfold.

Furthermore, the collapse of the dowry system and other forms of pre-mortem inheritance removed an additional disincentive to prolific childbearing for poor couples.

If children made the spinning wheels hum, they were also mouths to feed. Every time the merchants turned the screws of exploitation or market prices dipped, the only recourse of the family unit was to intensify its labour in commodity production. Increasingly, there was no turning back—land plots became smaller despite the marginality of the soil. More and more, non-food necessities were not available on the basis of local barter and had to be purchased in cash from distant towns. The need for year-round income rose. Intensified participation in small-scale commodity production, in long-run conditions of prohibitive competition from larger-scale capitalist workshops and factories, forced proto-industrial households up an economic blind-alley, in which their swelling numbers of children (consistent with an extensive mode of capitalist exploitation by merchants) went from being a salvation in boom years to an albatross in periods of market depression. This then was the economic and demographic double bind from which the prolific and rapidly swelling proto-industrial class could not ultimately escape. Increasingly, as the nineteenth century wore on and capitalist industrialization drove one cottage industry and region after another to the wall, this class spilled its children into the swelling ranks of an adjacent class—the proletariat—as its members lost effective possession of their means of production.

Early Proletarian Households

In the transition to capitalism in Western Europe, mass proletarianization (the formation of a mass of wage-dependent labourers divorced from the means of production) preceded industrialization (the generalization of the factory system and mass production by machinofacture) by a century or more. It would thus be wrong to think of a temporal sequence: 'from proto-industrialization to proletarianization'. In fact, both classes were swelling rapidly in the eighteenth century, both contributed to the demographic boom, and there was a great deal of traffic back and forth between them among the rural land-poor masses. This makes it very difficult to sort out the respective contributions of the two classes to the precipitous population expansion of that period, which obviously varied from one region to another. I emphasize, therefore, that what follows is more a line of reasoning than an empirically verified distinction between the demographic regimes of the two classes.

Unlike independent small producers, early proletarians had no property to transfer from one generation to the next, and therefore were completely removed from any effects of land inheritance patterns and even from the inheritance of trades from father to sons—except for a thin artisanal layer emerging from the guilds and early craft unions. The peak earning capacity of most proletarian adults—women as well as men—came early, in their twenties, and thus they tended to marry early. Households were not, for them, attached to an arable land parcel in any form and thus could be established quite readily by paying a money rent. (We should also note, in passing, that since marriage and stable household formation were now tied to regular wage employment, which

was subject to the notorious insecurity of layoffs and business slumps, that the promise of marriage must often have been dashed, and this factor—mobile young men tramping around the countryside leaving women in the lurch—probably accounts for a good deal of the sharp rise in fertility out of wedlock which is closely associated with proletarianization in the century from 1750–1850.)

Proletarianization also entailed—at least for the first-generation cohort who lost their place on the land—a certain loss of patriarchal authority of parents over their children, which was manifest in a greater capacity of young adults to court, to make their own mate selection, and to secure legal sanction for their marriages without awaiting parental approval. Without property inheritance as an infrastructure for parental mate selection and marriage timing, and with an increased capacity of young adults to secure their and wage income and accommodation, the institutional barriers to marriage and independent household formation were dramatically lowered.

Within marriage, making ends meet was extremely tough. Wages were low-primarily owing to a general glut of labour throughout this period—and the wage of the male breadwinner could come nowhere close to covering the family's monetary needs in purchasing necessary consumer goods, except for the best-paid artisans. At the same time, married women who were childbearing were overwhelmingly knocked out of the labour market, since the advent of the capitalist mode of production's characteristic separation of household from place of employment complicated the combination of infant-nurture with extradomestic employment for women. But this work, in combination with a husband's wage income (often irregular with long bouts of unemployment), was not enough to make ends meet, and the phase of early child-rearing, when children were not old enough to gain employment, was generally one of crushing poverty. The urgent goal was thus to make it over this hump and to be able to send the children out to work. The income of two or three youths, aged ten to eighteen, could constitute 40-60% of the household's total income. The incentive for childbearing was therefore strong, although mediated by the market and the chances of securing employment for children in the area where the family resided (within walking distance of the husband's workplace). The other inducement of this situation was to keep the teenage children at home, remitting their income, for as long as possible.

Proto-industrial and early proletarian families experienced a different linkage between the demand for labour-power and its internally generated supply, which affected the way each responded demographically to a prolonged slump in the market price of their respective commodities. While the labour-power which proto-industrial familes required to meet a specific market demand was highly variable, and they were generally induced to *intensify* their total labour exertion in response to falling prices; proletarian families faced a labour market which often made it difficult in a recession to expand their total employment to offset falling wage rates. The substitutability of one family member's labour-power for another was sharply curtailed as labour-power became a commodity which had to be set to work by an employer who was external

and indifferent to the family's overall subsistence situation. For proletarians, then, the specific employment prospects for children were key in shifting the fertility incentive structure. Whereas proto-industrial families could always count on being able to set their children to work productively at a very young age, proletarian families could not.

Finally, it appears that the rate of infant mortality was higher for early proletarians than for other labouring classes throughout the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, as the slums of the new industrial towns were ecological disaster zones with contaminated water supplies, open sewage, and so on. Epidemic disease took a frightful toll of infants and young children. If urban proletarians were not then poorer than the rural masses, they were nevertheless living in a much more lethal environment and their mortality rates were higher. There appears to have been a strong compensatory impulse in these circumstances to shorten birth spacing and reduce, as well, the average duration of breast-feeding, or to farm it out to a wetnurse; all of which contributed to an escalating fertility rate. The combination of high fertility and infant mortality thus made for an enormous squandering of women's labour-power, exhausting them and debilitating their health.

Industrial capitalism in the moment of its triumphant breakthrough here revealed its darker side. Private capitalists, under the whip of competition, displayed a ruinous indifference to the most elementary preconditions of the proletariat's life-reproduction, and above all, to women, forced to try to reconcile the antagonistic demands of the daily and generational cycles of labour-power. Without tracing, in detail, the entire causal chain, I want to suggest that there was an underlying, if mediated, connection between the dominant (absolute) mode of capital accumulation in this period of primitive accumulation, which consumed labour power extensively (prolonging the working day, utilizing child labour, and forcing women to rise from childbearing prematurely), and the dominant fertility regime of the proletariat—which produced future labour power 'extensively' as well, within an enforced assertion of quantity over quality as reflected in the character of the investment made in children.

Mature Proletarian Households

With remarkable simultaneity across Western Europe, the fertility regime of the proletariat underwent a fundamental shift in the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries. Whereas the average cohort fertility was close to five between 1850 and 1870, it fell to slightly over two for cohorts born at the beginning of the twentieth century. This dramatic decline was almost wholly the result of a decrease in marital fertility due to the widespread cessation of childbirth in the early thirties.

Certainly women's mean age at first birth did not increase in this period; in fact, it probably decreased slightly as the age at first marriage fell. Nor was there a decline in the nuptiality rate that could account for any substantial part of the aggregate fertility decline. Changes in (step 1) limit-conditions for household formation did not then play any signifi-

cant role in this shift.³¹ Birth intervals were not increasing either; an increase in contraceptive use offset a decline in the incidence and duration of breastfeeding, leaving birth-spacing essentially unchanged. So overwhelmingly, the decline was due to 'stopping' on a mass scale, as couples and/or wives evidently concluded that 'enough was enough' once they had borne two or three children.³² How can this transformation in marital fertility be explained?

This question has provoked intense research and heated debate among historical demographers, which I cannot possibly review here.³³ I am inclined to follow Caldwell's lead in identifying the generalization of compulsory schooling, and the effective termination of full-time child labour, as the major institutional changes which furnished the socioeconomic impetus to long-term fertility decline.³⁴ The termination of child labour ended the family wage economy for urban proletarian households and therefore fundamentally altered the cost/benefit equation for raising children.

On the one hand, the prospective earning capacity of children living at home was drastically curtailed. Regular school attendance greatly reduced the time available for wage labour, and employers were legally forbidden to hire children to work during school hours. Furthermore, among children (particularly boys) with some education, parents could no longer expect an automatic wage remission when they did eventually go out to work as adolescents. The break-up of the family wage economy deepened the fetishism of the wage form, which was increasingly seen to belong, by rights, to the worker who earned it. This marked the beginning of a secular transition to the modern norm, where the acquisition of one's first full-time job is regularly associated with leaving home and living 'on one's own'.

On the other side of the ledger, per capita costs of raising children rose sharply with the advent of universal schooling. Above and beyond school

³¹ We are here seeking to explain a fundamental fertility shift occurring *suites* a mode of production. As an indicative check on the conceptual model outlined above, it is important to note that this change did *sui* occur in step 1 conditions which demarkste the limits of proletarian household formation within the capitalist mode of production. If they had, our model would be suspect. The shift in fertility regime from peasant to proto-industrial and early proletarian households *did* involve basic alterations in step 1 conditions, as we have seen. This is, as expected, in passing from one mode of production to others.

³² The fertility decline was closely associated with a drop in infant mortality, but it has not been demonstrated that the latter generally preceded or caused the former. What is clear is that a decline in *child* mortality (one to five years) generally preceded the fertility decline in Western Europe, and this change must have facilitated parity-dependent birth-control, since couples could increasingly count on their existing children, having survived the first year, living through to adulthood. (See *The Effects of Infant and Child Mortality on Fertility*, Samuel H Preston [ed.], New York 1978.)

³³ The intensity with which this research has been conducted, and its capacity to attract generous funding support from governments and private foundations, is hardly due to the collective curiosity of historians. Rather, it has been animated by the desire to isolate a set of factors which triggered the onset of the West's historic fertility decline so that they might somehow be reduplicated, or at least simulated, in Third World countries today in order to engineer a comparable decline there. It comes as no surprise then to find the Rockefeller Foundation as a major sponsor of such research.

³⁴ Mass Education as a Determinant of the Timing of Fertility Decline', Population and Development Review, 1980, 6(2), pp 225-55

taxes, fees and other obvious expenses, formal education exerted intense pressure on parents, often expressed through the demands of children themselves, for the provision of better clothing, hygene, nutrition and medical care. The rise of schooling not only altered the economics of child-raising, it also had a profound impact of the aspirations which working-class parents held for their children. 'A good education' was what working-class parents tried to bequeath to their kids to help them make their way in the world; and great sacrifices were made and justified with the consoling thought that, with an education, their children might at least be able to secure better jobs, and live in greater security, than they had.

As 'stopping'—the cessation of childbirth well before menopause—became a general norm for working-class women, it seems reasonable to infer that regular contraceptive use in marriage must have become commonplace. Though the evidence is admittedly scanty (and much more investigation in this area is required), there are grounds for suggesting that, in 'stopping', masses of working-class women were asserting their reproductive rights in an elementary sense. Information was disseminated and support extended in this endeavour through informal kin and friendship networks spreading out on a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood basis. The formal and public tip of this iceberg was evident in the formation of eugenics associations and the pervasive distribution of birth-control pamphlets and books. In England, for example, an estimated one million such tracts were sold between 1876 and 1891, and Annie Besant's popular Law of Population, aimed specifically at working-class women, went through some 110 editions!

The sharp decline in mantal fertility constituted, in effect, a fundamental shift in the prevailing pattern of working-class investment in its future generation—from an enforced concern with quantity to one of quality. Once again, I want to relate this transformation in the replacement cycle of labour-power, to the dominant trends in labour-power's consumption in industry and in capital accumulation, which shifted in the same period from a regime of absolute to one of relative surplus-value extraction. In other words, both the capital accumulation and the labour-power reproduction cycles were converted from extensive to intensive modes of regeneration.

As capital shifted from an absolute to a relative mode of surplus-value extraction, major capitalists concentrated on intensifying the productive exertions of adult male workers (primary breadwinners) in the key industrial sectors. The employers relinquished, under considerable pressure, child labour and the twelve and then the ten-hour day. This shift to a higher male wage regime made it possible for a family of four to live on a trade-union wage. A single (male breadwinner) model of labour-power consumption and remuneration altered the larger socio-economic context within which proletarian couples were now keen to reduce family size by stopping conception once two or three children had been born. The unorganized labouring poor, sending their children to work at (or

³⁵ See Fraser Harrison, The Dark Angel: Aspects of Victorion Seemelity, Glasgow 1979, chs. 9–11

before) the legal school-leaving age, could not get by on the father's wage, and were much more inclined to go on and bear four or more children. The wages of these offspring have continued to play a critical role in family maintenance for many poor and single-parent families down to the present day.

Conclusion

Since this article has been written in a frankly exploratory vein, it is appropriate to conclude with speculation. Is it not possible that the breakthrough to industrial capitalism in Western Europe (in contradistinction to other social formations with a comparable level of developent) had at least something to do with the distinctive family form, marital pattern and fertility regime which prevailed among the rural masses in the early modern era?

I am not suggesting, as some have, that the dependent cultivators of England, for example, were really never peasants at all, but capitalist farmers living in modern atomized nuclear families as far back as the Middle Ages. Rather, it is the particular discontinuity—rupture and release—from the peasantry's traditional domestic arrangements which must be highlighted. The prevalent form of the Western European peasant family's reproduction cycle, where neolocality was combined with late and non-universal marriage, generated a very distinctive type of fertility control. Once this 'nuptiality valve' burst, with the spread of cottage industry organized by merchant capitalists, it unleashed a prolific capacity and employment-responsive form of household formation among the rural landless, which, in turn, supplied employers with a virtually inexhaustable reservoir of cheap, mobile and readily exploitable labour-power throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The continuous regeneration of this reserve was instrumental in easing capital over the initial hump of primitive accumulation, based on extensive modes of capital accumulation and labour-power utilization.³⁶

This analysis, which emphasizes the demographic dimension of the early proletanar's growth from the ranks of the rural landless, need not be counterposed to the more traditional Marxist account of the peasantry's divorce from the land through enclosure, engrossment and competitive displacement. Both processes were indispensable to the proletanar's formation, though of course their relative importance and particular interaction varied greatly from one region to the next. Furthermore, nothing in this very general account supplants the need for specific and detailed analyses of uneven and combined developments in the various formations of Western Europe. But it does perhaps suggest an ironic twist to E.P. Thompson's memorable dictum that the working class was present at its own making. For in the period of its formation, before the Industrial Revolution, the working class evidently 'made itself' in more ways than one.

³⁶ Third World formations today also furnish immense reservoirs of cheap and mobile labour power. Why then is indigenous capital accumulation of the extensive type not fostered there in the same fushion? To a limited extent it is, but the overriding drives of metropolitan capital erect (and selectively remove) barriers to rapid multi-faceted industrialization in these countries. On the eve of the Industrial Revolution of course, Western Europe did not face such an imposing external force, its major states were already imperialist powers in their own right. Such is the privilege of going first.

A Statutory Right to Work

It was widely believed after the Second World War in Britain that the 'right to work' had been generally won; the greatest economic evil of the prewar years seemed to have been overcome through reforms.* Yet now, again, unemployment has returned in a seemingly permanent form and there appears to be neither the understanding nor the will to confront the problem effectively. Among professional economists, there has been an influential revival of pre-Keynesian, neo-classical perspectives which have sought to reconceptualize unemployment as 'voluntary' and as the product of rigidities in the labour market and of disincentives to work created by the welfare system. This position has provided the theoretical basis for the Thatcher and Reagan programmes, which are premissed on the belief that the Keynesian arrangements of the postwar period, far from abolishing unemployment as was thought, in fact had merely caused inflation and made worse the recession that has 'inevitably' followed it. Nor has the problem of unemployment yet had the priority that one might have expected from economists of the left.²

Neo-Keynesian policy debates have continued through the recent period to concentrate instead on the advocacy of incomes policy as a means of controlling inflation, on the balance of payments problem, or on the system of international credit. These have been the fundamental preoccupations of economic policy-makers within both the Labour Party and the Social-Democratic Party. While such forms of restored Keynesianism would, unquestionably, mark an improvement over the policies of the radical right, it seems doubtful whether conventional demand management remedies alone could succeed in restoring the full employment levels of the 1950s and 1960s.

Since I am a sociologist rather than an economist, the approach to the problem of unemployment in this article will be unavoidably naive in technical economic terms. Without detailed quantification, the following argument proposes a kind of 'middle-range' theory, starting from the value-premiss that the right to employment is a central attribute of citizenship, and grounding this in a historical perspective of the struggle for 'social rights'. Specific institutional changes are proposed by which this right might be made effective. This level of programmatic thinking, which imagines the effects of a specific structural reform on the whole economic system, seems to me essential to the development of socialist strategy in the coming period. The practical reason of the Left must be bold enough to explore the outer limits of the possible, and hopefully this initial argument for a campaign based on the demand for a right to work will be taken up and criticized by those more qualified than myself to test its technical implications.

Social Rights and the Market Economy

Liberal democracies such as Britain accord many rights to their citizens, and the development of 'social democracy' has been widely understood as the extension of these rights from a negative and largely political definition into a system of positive social and economic entitlements. The liberal definition of rights originally concerned itself with the 'negative freedom' not to be interfered with by other citizens and especially the state—Locke's rights to life, liberty and possessions. This definition corresponded with the emergence of agrarian capitalism and chiefly formulated the rights of property-owners. Subsequently, universal rights to political participation were won through extensions in the franchise as the state's importance in determining the conditions of life of social classes became understood and contested. The 'welfare state', established through the need to achieve mass mobilization and consensus in wartime, and through working-class pressure, enlarged these rights into increasing social and economic entitlements, in the broader concept of citizenship

^{*} I would like to thank Robin Blackburn and Peter Howells for their encouragement and

¹ J. Shackleton's article, 'Economists and Unemployment', in the National Westminster Bank *Quarterly Resion* (February 1982), helpfully reviews this literature. There is a fuller symposium on these questions in Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol (eds.), *The Critis in Economic Theory*, New York 1981

² Important exceptions are the Community Development Project members who did pioneering work on inner-city economic decline, and the economic advisory groups now working for some Labour municipal authorities (London and Sheffield, for instance) on the same problems

described in T. H. Marshall's seminal article³ of the postwar reconstruction period. As a result of these changes, rights to education for children up to the age of sixteen (and subject to certain limiting conditions beyond), rights to health care, and rights to a minimum level of subsistence through entitlements to social security and supplementary benefit, are among the social and economic rights which British nationality and residence (itself now contested through immigration laws) entitle citizens to. These rights of the citizen have, as their necessary obverse, obligations upon the state to fulfil them in specified ways, and they are enforceable (though with some practical difficulty) at law.

The idea of full employment as a 'social right' is contemporary with the development of other provisions of the welfare state, deriving from Bevendge and Keynes's proposals for the management of welfare capitalism, and from the organized popular pressures which gave weight to these during and after the Second World War. But while it was widely believed that full employment or the right to a job was the keystone to the whole edifice of welfare (Beveridge thought that welfare provision should be confined to those not able to work), this was never thought of as an individual, legal entitlement in the same way that the other social rights were conceived. Full employment was to be achieved not by guaranteeing a job to each separate individual (in the same way that local education authorities are obliged to find school places for each child), but by measures affecting the aggregate of employment in the economy as a whole, which would then create the conditions in which individuals could find jobs. Keynes's theories of demand management and the practical success of postwar governments in maintaining unprecedented levels of full employment (with some regional disparities) for twenty years made this seem a feasible way of fulfilling this 'right to work', and the difference between this and other rights of citizenship in regard to their form of implementation did not attract attention.

In fact, the contrast between the legally enforceable rights to certain kinds of social and welfare provision, and the absence of any enforceable right of the individual to work, represents a major division within the fabric of welfare capitalism between the sector dominated by the market and by economic contract, and the sector regulated by the state through the universal provision of various services or income entitlements. Work is not conceived primarily as a 'benefit' to the individual to be claimed by him or her like an entitlement to income, but is provided in the first instance in the interests of employers. The supply of labour and its levels of payment are determined by the mutual interest of employer and worker, and not by consideration of need or principle, in the theory and practice of the market. As Edward Thompson has shown this was one of the most bitterly contested principles of the capitalist economy. The success of a market economy depends on its mechanisms for allocating resources in an efficient way, and labour is one of its major resources

³ T. H. Marshall, 'Critzenship and Social Class' in *Socialogy at the Craumous*, London 1963.
⁴ Adman Sinfield has pointed out in his *What Unemployment Meets* (London 1981) that this division between state welfare and private labour market has tended to remove working life from the concerns of social policy. The split between welfare and market sectors, and its consequences, is also discussed in the final chapter of N. Parry, M. Rustin and C. Satyamurti (eds.), *Social Work, Welfers, and the State*, London 1978.

(according to Marx, the only ultimate source of value). It thus appears to be in the interest of the working of the economy as a whole, and thus a common interest, that labour should be deployed in ways advantageous to employers, and not deployed where it is not advantageous to them. While these laws are followed most closely at the present time in the market sector, where profit and loss measure efficiency or inefficiency in the allocation of resources, they are also often followed as a matter of policy in the non-trading parts of the state sector. Here too, workers are employed, at least in principle, at the lowest cost and measures are sought (pupil-teacher ratios, patient-doctor ratios, bed-occupancy rates etc.) which enable them to be deployed in the most efficient way.

Keynesian reforms sought to preserve this principle of allocating labour in accordance with the needs of the market while creating a de facto right to work by manipulating the aggregate demand for labour so that it balanced the supply. But it now appears that this system of providing full employment through a market regulated by budgetary management has irretrievably broken down not only in Britain, but throughout the capitalist world. There is now no 'full employment' and thus no 'right to work', and little or no prospect of these being restored. While political parties in Britain offer various prescriptions for reducing unemployment and creating more jobs, none has a programme for restoring the full-employment position of the postwar period, and all now refrain from declaring 'full employment' as a feasible objective. Many analysts in fact forecast that the situation will become worse, not better, the capital investment needed to improve Britain's competitive position in manufacturing industry (if it takes place) may well destroy more jobs than it creates. The problem of a long-run increase in unemployment is in fact becoming recognized as a general problem of advanced economies, and this further discourages particular governments from believing they can solve it on their own. Particularly crucial in the gestation of the problem on an international scale has been the pursuit of deflationary policies by so many capitalist governments, and also the effective displacement especially of unskilled labour in advanced countries by investment in newly industrializing countries. Another factor may be the saturation of markets in the advanced countries with the consumer products of the last wave of expansion (consumer durables, motor cars, etc.), and the failure to create sufficiently extensive consumer demand in the developing world to offset this. But while one can envisage this trend to higher unemployment being arrested by a move towards expansionist economic policies, especially if this takes place in the United States and on an international as well as a national scale, it is hard to imagine that any change in these external market conditions will restore full-employment as it was known immediately after the war. Indeed, the absence of any significant proponents in Britain of such an optimistic view tells its own ominous story. In these circumstances, the prospects for full employment in Britain, one of the weakest of the advanced economies, are bleak indeed.

It has perhaps to be accepted that the phase of capitalist development in which 'Keynesian' techniques of budgetary management could ensure full employment has passed. This is not to say that Keynesian approaches to the economy are not preferable to monetarist ones; they give a different

priority to employment and output over the avoidance of inflation and returns to rentier capital, and are associated with commitments to real rather than formal conditions of citizenship. Especially this would be the case if they were supplemented in a weak economy such as Britain's by the additional instruments of direct control over the balance of trade as the Cambridge neo-Keynesians of Wynne Godley's group have advocated. It is also true that 'Keynesian' measures would be more effectively deployed on an international (or even a European) scale than by a single state in isolation. But the problem seems to go deeper than the rejection of Keynesian measures, and few analysts seem to imagine that full employment would be restored in the West even if these measures were now generally deployed. Different theorizations and different forms of intervention in market economies are now needed if the goal of full-employment or jobs for all is again to be made an attainable one.

A Statutory Right to Work

In this article I want to suggest that the mode of addressing the problem of the right to work needs to be radically altered. Instead of the level of employment being treated as a dependent variable—the contingent outcome of various macro-economic management techniques—I shall argue that it should become a limiting planned condition for the operation of mixed economies that there should be a job available for each individual who chooses to work. Faced with a long-term increase in unemployment on the present catastrophic scale, it would be possible to argue for a more thoroughgoing transformation of capitalist economies into wholly planned or socially-owned systems. But in this article I adopt a different approach, taking as a point of departure the problem of unemployment (which of course has many other ramifications), and outlining only that degree of intervention in the market economy which would establish a right of work for all.

There are many precedents for such specific and local interventions into the workings of the market economy. Until a few years ago, most people thought that 'full employment' was already the result of such an intervention, following the teachings of Keynes. But in addition, these economies are able to function while their governments determine that none below a certain age work; that all between certain ages go to school; that all needing medical treatment (more or less) receive it. The entire state welfare system represents a compromise between the allocations of the free market and the application of universal and uniform rules of provision following public decisions. There is no reason to assume that this boundary between the domain of the market and the domain of collective decision has been fixed for all time, or that new limiting conditions to the operations of the market cannot be set when evident need and popular demand justify it. It is possible to plan parts of market systems without planning all of them (just as conversely some Eastern European economies are attempting to introduce markets into planned economies without introducing large-scale private ownership, and without abolishing a basic framework of planning). It is a matter of working out the implications for the rest of the economic and social system of deciding to achieve by planning what can now be achieved by no other method, namely a universal right to work.

What will be proposed is that the 'right to work' will become a right which can be claimed by each individual and enforced through the law like other social rights. A proposal which makes the right to work universal and legally enforceable offers a fundamental reorientation to this problem of the kind that is now necessary, and will get us away from the cautious bidding of political parties to reduce the unemployment total by this or that unsatisfactory figure, implausible enough even in prospect without allowing for the attrition which experience of government would undoubtedly bring. The point of the proposal is that it makes the provision of employment, like the provision of health care, education, or political rights, an absolute obligation of government, and no longer a contingent aim dependent on trade-offs with various other economic objectives. Many specific mechanisms to reduce unemployment have already been initiated in mixed economies employment subsidies, industrial training and work-experience schemes, job-creation programmes but these have everywhere been conceived as temporary and ad hoc programmes. Only so far as young people are concerned, where short-term training and work experience programmes are evolving into more permanent schemes, have these been conceived in principle in comprehensive terms. It is the essence of this proposal that the state would take responsibility, through these and other measures, for finding work for all those whom the 'free' employment market was not able to place.

A proposal to institutionalize a universal 'right to work' may have the ment of connecting with beliefs which enjoy wide support and not only on the political left. It is obvious that the absence of work represents a massive waste for society in the products and services not made or provided. It represents a loss for each individual deprived of work, and with the existing levels of unemployment in Britain there can be few without first-hand acquaintance with many people beset by this catastrophic experience. Reciprocity of giving and receiving is a natural social condition, and there is a need to contribute to the well-being of others as well as to be cared for by them. It is part of the common-sense meaning of the idea of work, and not only a result of its organization through the market, that 'work' involves a contribution to the welfare of others. (One of the conditions which the definition of work as a right would have to meet is to make this element of contribution real; work, unlike education, health care or income-maintenance cannot be provided merely as a benefit to its recipient.) For these reasons, what is being proposed may be less utopian than some may initially think. It may be that the support that can be won for a specific transformation in the capitalist economy, in response to a major and obvious dysfunction such as unemployment, will be much greater than socialists can now achieve for more ambitious but abstract programmes. The discourse of rights and citizenship may also have more resonance among the British people as a language of political reform than any other that is available. That certainly seems to be the leading precedent for major reforms in this society in which systematic political ideas of any kind have few supporters. Certainly it is urgent that there should be a much more fundamental discussion about the retreat

 $^{^{5}}$ I have offered some theoretical justifications for this view in 'A Socialist Consideration of Kleinian Psychoanalysis' in NLR 131 (January/Pebruary 1982).

from full employment and of possible means of recovering this lost political ground. There seems to be a fatalistic and defeatist consensus among politicians and opinion-formers of left and centre at the present time that the problem is insoluble, and that it would only raise false expectations to propose solutions. It is this demoralized climate of public opinion that now has to be challenged.

The proposal to socialize the labour market to a degree sufficient to provide a universal right to work competes with an alternative market theory which is now being tested to destruction on the British economy. This market theory is open to fundamental moral as well as theoretical objection, especially for the overriding priority it accords to the principle of reward according to desert rather than need in the allocation of resources. Market theorists defend themselves against (justified) accusations of heartlessness by postulating, in defence of actual unemployment, a 'natural' level of unemployment which public policy can make worse but never, in the long run, better. Part of the revisionary exercise of Chicago economics in the last few years has been to argue that postwar full employment was in fact merely an untenable short-run defiance of these laws, rather than the managed long-run equilibrium at a level of full employment that some thought had at last been achieved. So the monetarist programme doesn't really claim to be about restoring full employment, but only about the acceptance as 'natural' of whatever level of unemployment turns out to remain once its prescriptions are followed. (It is in reality arguing for the necessity of a substantial 'reserve army of labour'.). Meanwhile the prescriptions in countless Institute of Economic Affairs pamphlets are for attacks on trade-union powers as a prime source of rigidity in the labour market (a less attended problem is the rigidity caused by defensiveness and fear in the working population), and for the restoration of markets in as many formerly public goods (such as health and education) or publicly-owned capital stocks (oil, telecommunications) as possible. It seems improbable, from the evidence so far, that this programme could ever restore the British economy to general prosperity.

Economic Contradictions of Welfare

A particular problem for this laissez-faire model, which looks back to the nineteenth century for its model of successful operation, is provided by the welfare system itself. I shall contend that the intention of the welfare system, of insulating the dependent and unemployed population from the harsh consequences of the labour market, is to some degree effective and that this undermines the classical impact of unemployment—of the reserve army of labour—in making possible the profitable redeployment of capital. To this extent, the Right's hostility to the welfare system has a rational basis. Their argument is often presented in false and simplistic terms, as an assertion that present levels of unemployment can be explained by the unemployed preferring to remain idle at existing levels of social security benefit instead of taking available jobs. Evidence on actual levels of unemployment and on the attitudes of the unemployed show this to be in general a false claim. There are manifestly many more millions seeking work than there are currently jobs available. Neverthe-

less there may be more indirect mechanisms which have some of the same effects 6

The 'reserve army' of the unemployed can exercise its full coercive force on the conditions and wages of employed labour only when it faces even more adverse conditions of existence than is now the case. In nineteenth century circumstances, when the unemployed faced starvation or the workhouse (and when trade unions encountered much greater difficulty in defending the interests of the employed), the downward pressures on wage levels and employees' powers exercised by unemployment were incomparably greater than in present conditions. While the unemployed are (even poorly) supported by a social security system and the employed are protected by strong trade unions, the outcome of unemployment appears to be the creation of a boundary between the occupational communities of the employed and the unemployed. Sociological evidence suggests in fact segregated patterns of social relationship and a kind of passive and resigned adjustment to unemployment, with increased depression and illness. This may explain why it is that while there has been some slow-down in the rate of wage inflation in conjunction with the rise of unemployment, there has not been a collapse of wage-rates. Rather, what is most striking is the insulation of the employed population from the effects of unemployment. Standards of living of the majority in work have by and large been maintained, while the unemployed have been plunged into poverty and have had to bear the main economic burden of the recession. While this has helped to restrict the unpopularity of the government, it has severely limited also the competitive 'benefits' of unemployment which are its main result according to free market theory. Were it the case that workers and their families were faced with actual starvation or incarceration as a result of job-loss, the opportunities for employers to reduce wages, to strike-break, and to attack the position of those in work, would surely have been considerably greater than they now are. Governments of course fear that the desperation which further reductions in subsistence standards for the unemployed would bring might be mobilized against them, and not against trade unions or those in work. The risks of unrest give many interests an incentive to prefer to maintain passivity, at the cost of providing a measure of subsistence, to the full rigours of the market. Nevertheless, this strategy has deprived capital of much significant benefit from unemployment to offset the losses of declining demand.

It is not only the institutions of the welfare state that work against the operation of the harsh market model favoured by the Thatcherites, but also the climate of moral assumptions now established over two whole generations. In the powerfully individualist ideological climate of the nineteenth century it was possible to enforce the view that poverty and unemployment were the fault of the individual alone and not the responsibility of society. But while the Government and its supporters have made strenuous attempts to attach blame to the unemployed (via campaigns against 'scroungers', 'fiddlers' and so on) it is widely recognized that unemployment is not primarily the fault of the

⁶ R Layard in *More Jobs, Lass Inflation* (London 1982) reports some relevant research on work-seeking and its relation to the system of unemployment benefit.

unemployed. Perhaps corresponding to the large-scale nature of modern economic organization, and certainly to the extended role of government in social life, is a deep level of recognition of the social rather than individual origin of these problems. And in a society in which universalist moral claims to fairness and justice have become deeply entrenched, it becomes politically difficult to propose the punishment of the unemployed for the indirect benefit of others: market ideology just does not command this level of popular assent. There are therefore strong pressures on the Thatcher Government, sustained by a small but significant number of Conservatives, to maintain the value of social security benefits, and there have therefore been limits on the Government's ability to use their drastic reduction as a means of indirect assault on general wage levels.

The Government's public expenditure strategy has been another casualty of the interaction of the welfare system with rising unemployment. Savings in local government spending and in nationalized industry investment (mainly on capital budgets) have been offset by lost revenues from taxation and increased payments in unemployment and social security benefits—a direct result of unemployment. Hopes of substantial reductions of interest rates, through lessened Government demands for borrowing, were also aborted, until far into the recession. The Government has succeeded in increasing the proportion of national income spent by the state, when one of its principal objectives was to reduce it.

So all in all, it seems that the monetarist policies pursued by the Thatcher Government have been a serious failure in their own terms. The costs of deflation in lost productive capacity, reduced investment and lost profits have been far greater than its benefits to British industrial capital. A further period of Thatcherism would no doubt see further attempts to restore competitiveness through attacks on the welfare system and trade-union powers; these are logical enough from a neo-liberal standpoint. But the dysfunctions of this process (reduced demand and the disincentive to invest) seem greater than its positive effects. More capital seems to have been dismantled or to have migrated out of Britain than has been generated from increased exploitation. There seems to be an increasing and cumulative difficulty, the longer the present programme proceeds, of competing on an open market basis with the advanced countries of Western Europe and Japan, and with the industrializing low-wage economies of Latin America and South-East Asia. In a fully competitive system without the intervention of the state it seems likely that the British economy would merely continue in its decline.

The Socialized Labour Market

This failure of monetarism ought to be opening up space for different solutions to the problems of the economy to be attempted. One aspect of the above argument is particularly relevant. The 'statutory right to work' is intended to transfer the resources of the state from maintaining citizens out of work, to maintaining them (the population of working age, that is) in work. Moreover the cooperation of trade unions with an expansionist economic strategy may be easier to secure in exchange for the substantial

addition to workers' rights that would be involved in a statutory right to a job. Where Thatcherism has attacked the postwar foundations of a guaranteed income and trade-union rights, the proposal for a statutory right to work seeks to build on them, as positive contributions rather than impediments to economic success.

The proposal for a statutory right to work incorporates a number of assumptions. A key value-premise is that a realizable right to work would be an important extension of citizenship and equality; so important that if it cannot any longer be guaranteed by the techniques of macro-economic management, it should be secured by other forms of political intervention. What economists call the 'non-pecuniary' benefits of work, both to the individual and to society (e.g., the sense of meaning, reciprocity and social recognition) are given weight in assigning such priority to the right to work. It is, secondly, now recognized that material productive powers today make possible (and perhaps necessary) a simultaneous reduction in the total volume of work required. A guaranteed right to work is not seen as an alternative or competitor to this view, but its complement: it will be a disaster if the 'decline of work' is accomplished by throwing more and more of the population into redundancy and pauperism. It is, thirdly, recognized that there is an unavoidable distortion in considering the proposal separately from any wider programme of economic expansion and reconstruction, which will in any case involve the large-scale and deliberate creation of jobs. Some measure of artificial isolation of the 'statutory right' proposal from the wider economic context seems unavoidable for reasons of presentation; it is not possible for me to present it as part of a total economic plan. Finally, and for similar reasons of analytical simplicity, the case for a statutory right to work—to an actual job—is argued in ways intended to be compatible with many of the existing characteristics of the labour market.

The contractual basis of the private labour market, and the quasi-contractual basis of the public labour market, could be as far as possible preserved, while the agencies confined with implementing a universal right to work confined themselves to 'last resort' or 'residual' functions. Such a measure of socialization of the labour market will seem to some unduly minimalist. It should be pointed out, however, that it is on a contractual labour market that the functions of trade unions and collective bargaining now depend; most measures of socialization and planning in this area (such as incomes policies) are already resisted by the trade unions, and their support is unlikely to be forthcoming for any broader regulation of the labour market than is proposed here. Further, there are reasons for giving emphasis to the re-emergence of mass unemployment as a decisive issue for capitalist economies, and to regard the argument about it as being as critical as in the debates of the Thirties. A universal access to work at a fair income is conceived here as the moral basis of economic citizenship and as capable of winning more universal support than any other normative principle at this time. These are grounds for attempting to explore the minimum conditions by which this

⁷ This view has been presented forcefully in C. Jenkins and B Sherman, The Collapse of Work (London 1979), and its implications discussed in their The Laurer Shock (London 1981) Andre Gozz's Faravell to the Working Class (London 1982) is also relevant.

might be achieved. The conferring upon work of the status of an enforceable right would be a considerable gain even if it only restored ground that had been thought already won (until a few years ago) by other means. It was resistance to the indirect consequences of full employment (a widening agenda of popular demands, pressure for increased intervention by the state, and so on) which led to the revival of the neo-liberal Right, and reconquering this lost territory would not be without consequences for economic and cultural democracy.

Socialists in recent years have been more preoccupied with enhanced democratic control of capital than with ideas of socialization of the labour market. A larger planning role for the state, public ownership, industrial democracy, democratic control of pension funds and other workerowned capital, and an extended frontier of trade-union bargaining have been various means of seeking greater employee or public control of capital. Meanwhile it has seemed in the interests of labour, or at least of its trade-union institutions, to defend the labour market against regulation and instead to support collective bargaining as the main agency of working-class power. These movements to obtain more democratic control of capital have been recently in retreat in Britain. It is not intended as in any way a repudiation of these aims that this article concerns itself with the organization of labour. On the contrary, it will be suggested that the measures proposed would provide a source of support for those wishing to see capital made democratically accountable and may help to reverse this adverse political tide. But it is argued, against recent left-wing consensus, that the labour market can no longer be left to 'collective bargaining' to defend the interests of labour. It is doubtful, in fact, if egalitarian aims have generally been served by these methods, aside from the contradictoriness of favouring planning of two main factors of production but not of the third. The restoration of full employment must depend on the enhanced role of the state and on the imposition of new minimal principles of operation for the economy by planned means. The implications of this degree of 'socialization' of the labour market simply have to be faced up to, to avoid worse harm.

Halting the Downward Spiral

As things now stand, there is now a fundamental irrationality in the market mechanism, in the displacing of the costs of unemployment from firms in the market sector, which seem to 'benefit' from job loss, to the welfare system, which bears its costs. So that, the costs and benefits to the individual employer of a decision to employ a worker are quite different from its social costs. The higher the levels of state expenditure the greater is the disparity between the private and social costs of unemployment, and the greater the external diseconomies of redundancy. If employers now had individually to pay the costs of maintaining their own displaced workers (instead of merely paying generally for them through high taxation and interest rates) the diseconomies of maintaining large populations without work would be more evident to them. Where it leaves resources of labour and capital idle, the market sector continues to consume from the state while contributing nothing to it.

In recent years, the relationship between the state and the market sectors

has been influentially defined by the neo-liberals of the Right as a parasitic one, in which a greedy public sector spends resources produced by the private sector, which is thus subjected to a crippling burden of taxation and high interest rates. This argument has wilfully neglected to notice that the boundary between the public and private sectors is different from that between the planned and market sectors, and that the welfare system contributes to wealth as well as consuming it, through its planned and non-traded services. State enterprises such as British Telecom and Britoil are also able to earn surpluses and make a net contribution to national wealth. The state sector can achieve increases in the real product of its planned services through increases in efficiency or through improved techniques, for example in teaching methods or health care. As a result of these ideological omissions and distortions, this critical view of state spending as a 'burden' on the private sector has widely been accepted as a reason for reducing state expenditure and it is on this model that the Thatcher Government's policies are based.

This model offers a biased account of the respective contributions of private and public sectors to the national wealth at the best of times. But in a market economy predisposed to create unemployment (through the international migration of capital to low-wage regions, and technological displacement of labour) the balance of advantage between 'planned' and 'market' operations in the economy shifts decisively towards planning. Even while it leaves large potential resources of capital and labour unused, and thus reduces its contribution to state funding through taxation, the capitalist sector nevertheless continues to depend on the state to maintain and reproduce those resources of labour and capital. So, for example, the state sustains increasing deficits on underused railway lines, coal mines, and steelworks, and has to pay for health, education and social security (needed for the reproduction of labour) from a diminished tax-base. As the private sector continues to decline in response to reduction in demand for its product, the neo-liberal Right demands yet further reductions in the burden of welfare and state spending. Yet pursuing these measures brings about a further downward spiral, whose effect is to inflict irrecoverable losses on the economy, and to degrade civilized standards of life, even undermining the conditions of liberal democracy itself. This road may lead to the imposition of 'law and order' by armed force, and to authoritarian government, if these deprivations eventually lead to revolt. There is no reason to believe that the natural low point of this recessionary cycle for the United Kingdom has been anywhere near reached. It is for this reason that more extensive planning rather than a more perfect market is appropriate to the condition of an economy which already has a major state sector.

It was against an earlier version of this situation that Keynes insisted in the 1930s, as an enlightened supporter of capitalism, that the minimum condition for the successful operation of market economies was that they made full use of their under-used resources of labour and capital. Capitalism, he correctly thought, had to devise that measure of planning which would ensure full employment and therefore a minimum acceptable share in society's resources for all. His critique of the unregulated market system has lost none of its relevance, but what is in doubt is whether the limited kinds of intervention he proposed can now

ensure full employment in the long run. In fully-planned socialist economies, or planned market economies in conditions of full war mobilization, these conditions are secured as an aspect of more total planning of resources, including labour. (There are drawbacks too, but it is hard to imagine if a 'wartime mobilization' was again called for in Britain that unemployment would not disappear as rapidly as it did in 1940.) But in these proposals I want to test out whether there might still be specific forms of socialization capable of being devised to meet these objectives, short of a system of comprehensive economic planning. This is because there is likely to be wider support for economic reforms specifically related to unemployment than for a more general socialist economy, at this point. In any case, it needs to be demonstrated what forms of intervention may and may not be feasible, even in a socialized economy. An economy which has abolished large-scale private ownership of capital (a defining objective of socialism) may still have reason to make use of market mechanisms to ensure an efficient allocation of its productive resources.

Means of Implementation

The essence of this proposal is that those unable to find work through the existing mechanisms of the labour market would be able to register with a specified state agency and become its employees. Let us call this the Statutory or Regional Labour Board. This agency would have the obligation to find or provide work for all such persons and would be expected to maintain those arrangements which would enable it to meet such a demand. This is not dissimilar from the way in which a local education authority is required to maintain enough school places to meet the requirements of eligible children, or in which a health authority facilitates medical provision. The agency, whose possible forms will be discussed in a moment, might have three major means available to it for the provision of work—all corresponding to piecemeal measures already employed by the British and other governments for job-creation. First, the state could provide subsidies to private employers to take on additional workers. Secondly, it could provide subsidies to other public-sector employers for the same purpose. Thirdly, jobs could be directly created by schemes initiated or funded through the Board. The workers concerned would in all cases be paid the rate normally appropriate for the job as negotiated by trade unions, wage councils or set in the corresponding free market. This proposal for a universal right to work is not to be equated with schemes deliberately designed to undercut normal wage rates. On the other hand, the normal obligations of workers to perform tasks responsibly and efficiently would also apply and employment would be conditional upon these obligations being met.

Especially from the standpoint of countering likely attacks from the Right, it is important to specify some of the economic justifications for the provision of state subsidies for job creation, and the scale on which these might be justified in terms of net economic benefit to society as a whole. The key argument here is that the state would act rationally were it to reimburse the employers of hitherto unemployed workers up to the full cost to it of their maintenance out of employment. There would be no economic loss to the state if the equivalent maintenance costs were paid in

respect of an employed worker rather than for an unemployed person. Any subsidy less than the full cost to the state of maintaining an unemployed person will conversely lead to a net benefit. The payments which it is relevant to consider are not only direct payments in unemployment and supplementary benefit which form the most obvious basis for calculating 'economic' subsidy levels, but also that portion of state expenditures normally paid for in taxation and national insurance by unemployed workers, which the unemployed do not pay. While state expenditure in supporting employment in the market sector (it is immaterial from this point of view whether firms are publicly or privately owned, where they are required to operate at a surplus) do not exceed expenditures made and revenues foregone in relation to the unemployed, they would seem to be sconomically justified. The Treasury's Economic Progress Report for February 1981 calculated this figure of the total cost to the state of an averaged unemployed worker from the private sector at £3,400 per annum. If we further assume that firms in receipt of such subsidies behave rationally in terms of market theory and employ workers only where their marginal product equals their marginal cost to the employer (net of subsidies, etc.) then it follows that the employment of such 'subsidized' workers is no less advantageous than not employing them. Given lower subsidies, or higher marginal outputs, or taking into account non-pecuniary and indirect benefits to the workers and society (less illness for example), there will be a net social benefit from the arrangement.

This argument is presented above as a justification of subsidies to employers in the market sector, as one prong of a broader employmententitlement strategy. There would be problems in ensuring that such subsidy arrangements did not disrupt the operations of the market in labour, and ingenuity would be needed to insulate the labour market as a whole from its possible dysfunctions. We will assume for present purposes that it is economically desirable that the labour market should allocate resources efficiently, and that such considerations cannot wholly be abandoned in favour of non-economic considerations. We also assume that a market sector—indeed a private sector—of some scale continues in existence while this proposal is implemented. While this proposal does have implications of a major kind for the balance of planned and market, public and private sectors (in favour of the relative growth of the public sector) it would be beyond the scope of the present discussion to propose the abolition of the private sector and the labour market as a precondition for it. For these reasons the argument assumes an attempt to implement a statutory right to work within a capitalist economy and accepts the conditions that this will unavoidably impose. Clearly much institutional ingenuity will be needed to make this even theoretically feasible, and it is important to distinguish the particular devices proposed below, which will no doubt be capable of much improvement, from these general principles.

It would be important to take steps to limit the potential distortions of this procedure. If firms can engage some workers at subsidized wage rates, why would they choose to engage any others at non-subsidized rates, for instance? One such limitation could be effected by the regional implementation of such a programme, such that the level of funding

available for the implementation of the statutory right to work was proportional to the level of unemployment in that particular region. This would avoid one of the major problems of labour market policy since the War, which is that measures of reflation intended to reduce unemployment in relatively depressed areas produce labour scarcity in more prosperous areas long before universal full employment is reached. The funding to ensure that labour is fully employed should be locally and regionally directed, and not confused with a general reflationary package.

If geographical structuring is one means of controlling the unintended effects of this employment programme, a temporal structuring would be another. The level of subsidy available (for the moment to employers operating in the market, whether private, public, or co-operative) would be related to the level of unemployment in a region at a given point of time, and the permissable subsidy would be periodically (annually?) re-determined as this level fluctuated. There should therefore be tendency for the subsidy to be self-cancelling, in the sense that as its multiplier effects led to general economic expansion and the taking-on of non-subsidised labour, so the future level of unemployment on which the next determination of funding would be based would be lower.

An additional limitation might be that firms would be able to take on only a fixed proportion of their workforce from this Statutory Board in any given year (this proportion being set in relation to regional unemployment levels). This would equalize the advantage of subsidy to firms in a given region and avoid another kind of distortion. Another limitation might be that firms could only employ workers from the Statutory Board for one year at a time. While employees' right to work would be guaranteed by the Board, the employer could only secure continuity of employment of a particular worker by putting workers on to their normal (non-subsidized) payroll, and would thus have an inducement to do this. Such limitations would be designed to protect the conventional labour market from the distorting effects of these special subsidies by standardizing their impact between firms and by imposing some disadvantages to firms (in terms of continuity and stability of employment) from employing workers on this basis.

The conditions under which workers would be eligible to register with the Board and become its employees require careful consideration if it is to be a supplement to the existing free labour market and not a general replacement for it. It might be that workers would become eligible only after a period of six months' unemployment, in order to ensure that the Board had responsibility for the long-term unemployed rather than for those routinely changing jobs. The Board would be required to 'place' all workers properly registered with it, and they would be entitled to the proper remuneration for the work concerned on condition that they performed it properly. The status of 'long-term' unemployed would thus become a voluntary one, since society would have ensured that all who chose to work, could do so.

The second and third prongs of this strategy involve creation of employment via existing public-sector employers, and via direct and specific employment creation programmes. There are more difficult problems here in maintaining a rational allocation of resources given the absence of certain markets. However, there are arguments here too for ensuring that employment decisions continue to be made with regard to the task of the 'enterprise' concerned and its most efficient or productive performance. It is important to recognise that 'wealth' is as much created by public-sector activity (health, education) as by private: this becomes especially obvious when the private and state sectors are providing similar services in competition with each other as in these two cases. While public-sector organizations should have available to them access to subsidized employment, this should be deployed in accordance with their proper institutional goals, and not degenerate into the making-up of jobs that produce neither use- nor exchange-values. This is to preserve the idea that work should of its nature involve contributions of value, and should be organized productively. We should not be seeking to create an economy of 'public assistance'; among other things this would undermine belief in the public sector as a producer of real values. To this extent public monitoring bodies such as Community Health Councils which represent the interests of consumers of these services provide some substitute for market indicators and strengthen the weak position of the consumers of public goods.

A third category of employment creation would be the direct creation of work by the Regional Labour Board itself, which would require to have access to state capital or borrowing for this purpose. There may be a necessary distinction between expenditure on labour subsidies paid to existing employers or firms, and additional expenditures on the capital (as well as labour) costs of employment creation where existing employers with their existing capital stocks were not able to take up the full surplus of labour. Capital programmes of this kind are difficult to keep analytically separate from other expansionary capital programmes, but it would follow from the obligation to offer work to all citizens that special capital expenditures would be required. In these circumstances governments would have an understandable interest in funding employment that was labour-rather than capital-intensive, and also, it must be acknowledged, to provide work at the lowest possible rates of pay. It is likely to be the case, therefore, that the majority of the work provided as the residual supply (after private and public sector employers had taken up for their usual activities as much as was deemed appropriate) would be relatively less skilled and labour-intensive. It can be imagined that this fraction of employment creation would tend to be in low-paid service, construction, and environmental improvement work, though other possibilities are discussed below. It would be a matter for political bargaining within given regions and with central government to determine what proportion of the funding would be for work of this kınd.

The availability of work for all who want it would have implications for the conditions under which unemployment and supplementary benefit are now awarded. There would clearly be the possibility (and likelihood) of greater duress in decisions to award benefits if in principle there was always work available, than in a situation where there is a large excess of applicants over vacancies and where it is therefore difficult to distinguish genuine job-seekers from others. It is likely that the guaranteed right to work would involve greater financial and moral pressure to work, expressed less in the persecution of claimants for suspected deception, as in now the case, than in the firmer insistence that job-offers were taken up. Subject to various qualifications and safeguards, the obligation to work in return for subsistence seems to be an acceptable principle. (It should apply to the owners of private property also.) It is hard to imagine any socialist or planned economy which did not subscribe to such a rule; what is problematic is not the principle but its mode of application and enforcement.

Given a general reduction of work, such a principle should allow for periods of educational and 'sabbatical' leave, and also for periods between jobs which allow workers to find jobs based on their own skill. There would of course be continuing income-maintenance for those involuntarily out of work, but for those who chose this situation one would expect this to be at lower levels than working incomes. The arguments for increased child benefit, (and 'infant child benefit' for children under five), involve a recognition that child-care is a form of work, and financial support for this function is an alternative to subsidized 'paid work'. Given that 'residual' work that would be provided might often be in low-paid categories, it is also critical that the tax and benefit system should be reformed to abolish the 'poverty trap' so that the marginal rate of return for low-paid work should be no lower than for other categories of work. It is crucial to these proposals that it is fairly paid work (after tax) that is guaranteed under this scheme, and not a form of stigmatized outdoor workhouse which in fact might worsen rather than improve the condition of the existing unemployed. The involvement of the trade unions in the management of such a programme is for these reasons also important.

The Democratic Planning of Employment

We now turn to the possible forms of agency which could implement the proposed statutory entitlement. It seems desirable that it should be regional in its scope of operation because of the variability of unemployment levels by region and the likely appropriateness of different kinds and scales of measures in regions of high and low unemployment. It also seems desirable that the agency concerned should have a specialized function, of providing appropriate work for the unemployed, so that some one institution would develop the appropriate expertise in this. The Manpower Services Commission is now the obvious nucleus of such an agency.

There are arguments for this agency being accountable to a broader institution of elected regional government, such as I have proposed in another recent article. The reason for this is that employment creation is connected with many other government functions (education and training, public investment, economic planning, public employment). The fragmentation of institutions responsible for labour market policy has up to now inhibited any coherent response to rising unemployment,

⁸ I have discussed the case for elected regional and national authorities with substantial economic planning powers in an article in the January 1982 issue of *Marxim Today*.

and the concentration of functions in elected regional authorities might help to meet this problem. Another example of decisions bearing on the level of unemployment are the possible methods now widely discussed for changing the pattern of employment itself, through a shorter working week, work-sharing, early retirement, increased time for training and education, etc. But under present conditions decisions concerning such changes are largely in the hands of employers and trade unions, who have little interest in measures whose beneficiaries will be not them but the unemployed and the public at large. How are divisions such as these between private and public interest to be resolved?

One might envisage that a regional authority with extensive spending powers and with regional economic planning functions would consider its unemployment problem in the following ways: It would know, given the statutory obligation to provide work that we are proposing, that it would have to find work for a given number of unemployed over a period. Its public expenditure budget, its economic planning strategy in relation to private employers, its education and training policy, and its own policy as a major employer, would all be relevant to its strategy for resolving this problem. Some of these levels of intervention would be ways of reducing the burden on its specialized employment creation department (the Regional Labour Board we have previously proposed). It would wish to ensure that this department had a manageable task, and economic planning within the authority would have to construct a strategy by combining the different possible measures available.

Central government would also be faced with a predictable scale of demands, for employment subsidies and capital grants, to meet the full cost of providing work as entailed by statute. It would also have grounds for relating its decisions in education and training provision, retirement arrangements, child benefit and maternity leave, and its practices as a large employer in terms of the length of the working week or year, to the size of the unemployment problem. The obligation to provide work for all would constrain both central and regional government agencies to adopt a kind of economic and social planning, relating different elements of public policy to one another, which is very different from current practice.

While there are arguments for a regional level of organization of the Labour Boards, and also for other aspects of economic and social planning, there would also be advantages in the involvement of more decentralized and local agencies in employment creation. The opportunity mobilize unused resources does provide the possibility of creating new public and social goods, as well as goods provided on the market. The funds available to Regional Boards could be bid for not only by private individuals, but also by cooperatives and by voluntary and neighbourhood associations. Resources could become available to fund socially-useful production by worker-controlled enterprises. Which

⁹ Tony Benn has made the interesting suggestion in a note on this paper that not only would local initiatives be important, but also that individuals should be eligible to apply for funding for particular work-projects.

¹⁰ The proposal therefore connects with the campaign for 'socially-useful' production initiated by the Lucas Aerospace Shop Stewards' Combine Committee; see Hilary Wainwright and Dave Elliot, *The Lucas Plan* (London 1982), and also my 'The Politics of Workers' Plans' in *Politics and Power 2*, 1980.

might later become viable in the market or supply the public sector. The long-term availability of some funding for public purposes at the neighbourhood level might help to overcome a lack of imagination about social goods which is a product of the bureaucratization of central and local government services, and which now widely discredits the idea of socialism. Community arts and recreation, 11 as well as locally based social services for children and the old, are examples of activities involving both capital programmes and paid work which might expect to grow in an economy of 'fully used resources'. The abolition of unemployment ought to bring not only an improvement in the lives of the unemployed, but an enhancement of capacity for communities to improve their real living standards.

One important objection that will be made to this proposal is that would be inflationary, both in requiring major increase in public spending and in increasing the likely pressures of wage-inflation as excess supply in the labour market is absorbed. These are potential difficulties though they can be limited by a number of factors. One of these is that everyone would be a producer and the burden of unproductive welfare payments would be substantially reduced, not increased, by the proposal. The differential regional implementation of the statutory right would also limit inflationary effects, as I have argued above. While the statutory right to work would weaken the sanction of unemployment on workers engaged in collective bargaining (not remove it, since workers who lost high-wage jobs in particular firms or industries would not necessarily find comparable employment), it could also have beneficial effects on the working of the labour market, from the point of view of economic growth. Workers' current interests in resisting technical change would be lessened by the assurance of alternative work, especially if it was the case that their Regional Labour or Regional Planning Board was committed not only to providing 'statutory work' but also to maintaining a regional economy appropriate to the skills of the workforce. While the restoration of a universal work ethic might seem an implausible objective for the 1980s, in practice this proposal for 'fair shares in work' makes imaginable a positive ethic of work, combined with a likely reduction of average working time initiated by public-sector employers.

Inasmuch as the removal of the threat of mass employment did (as it would) strengthen workers' bargaining power, a wider planning of incomes might be a necessary correlate of introducing a statutory right to work. It seems to me that the planning of incomes would be an acceptable trade-off for universal rights to employment. Socialists have sometimes argued that there would be hypothetical reforms in return for which incomes policies might be justified, and in practice have been prepared to settle for rather minor gains, as in the 'Social Contract' of the last Labour government. A statutory right to work seems to me to be an appropriate condition: a legislative guarantee of work for all would justify some other measures of planned control of the labour market. The unemployed have been made to pay for the current recession, and it is realistic to recognize that some redistribution of resources towards them (through taxation to

¹¹ Robert Hutchison's, The Politics of the Arts Council (London 1982), discusses the relative starvation of local and regional arts in the funding policies of the Arts Council.

pay for capital programmes, for example) would be necessary if unemployment is to be abolished. Greater prosperity should ensure that such sacrifices would be temporary, and the greater resources provided for public goods in such a system (can anyone imagine that the British private sector could by itself lift the British economy out of its decline?) make possible some more promising future for socialist perspectives. It is likely that balance of payments controls would be necessary, in Britain's economic plight, to meet the likely import demands which would follow full employment, but this is now a necessary condition of any foreseeable revival of the British economy. (There is an obvious unrealism in separating programmes for the British economy from its difficult international setting, but this is inevitable if one wishes to begin from a single problem.)

This proposal for a statutory right to work is suggested as a feasible element for a medium-term socialist economic policy. While it concentrates on specific measures of regulation of the labour market, it has some implications for the possible socialization of capital. One must be pessimistic, on past experience, about the possibilities of Labour's existing economic strategies achieving substantial control over, or direct socialization of, capital. Planning controls, nationalizations, or new state investments of the National Enterprise Board-type all historically run into immense resistance from British capital, whose cooperation invariably seems vital for Labour's wider expansionary aims. This will be even more the case with the more radical forms of enterprise now being proposed on the left for cooperatives or worker-initiated and workercontrolled enterprises. One advantage of a statutory obligation to create work is that would provide some 'push' as well as 'pull' for the public provision of capital, creating space in which public and worker-initiated enterprises could 'bid' for the capital funds to create the jobs required.

The proposal also seeks an ideological initiative at a difficult time. It seeks to pre-empt hostile denigrations of the poor and workless by proposing that the state, rather than providing inadequate benefit for those able to work, instead ensures or provides properly paid work. It seeks to link the social needs for more goods and services (the reconstruction of cities, for example) to the abysmal waste and deterioration of worklessness. It would make it possible to redefine the problems of 'law and order', as a natural consequence of mass poverty and redundancy, and make real solutions seem possible. It seeks to return British politics to the language of universal rights and citizenship, in terms of which most of its historic achievements have been won.

It is in some ways a pathetically modest proposal, but it is an indication of how deep the decline in expectations have been that at this point there is scarcely any other on the political agenda that offers a commitment to universal employment. Critical is the idea that access to useful work should be a statutory right, like the vote, or a minimum income, or rights to education, and not a contingent outcome of market forces. It is with this point of principle that a socialist argument against the resurgent politics of unemployment should begin.

Monetarism in London

Ken Livingstone

In May 1979 when Mrs Thatcher came to power, there were 132,000 people unemployed in Greater London.* In September 1982 there were 390,107. This amounts to a trebling of those without a job. For London as a whole, when allowance is made for unregistered women and for commuters, approximately one-eighth of London's workforce is now unemployed. In Inner London, the figure is one in six; in Stepney it is one in three. These figures amount to nothing less than an economic scandal.

This collapse of employment has taken place against the background of a world economic recession which struck all industrial countries severely in the mid-1970s and re-emerged in late 1979. But what figures from the OECD clearly show is that the British slump has been much more severe than those of the non-monetarist industrial countries. Faced with slow economic growth, Mrs Thatcher's response has been to engineer the deepest economic crisis that Britain has known since the 1930s. She succeeded in actually cutting national wealth by 7% by the end of 1982, and, at the very moment when this wealth was declining, consciously favoured the financier against the industrialist, the employer against labour, and the rich against the poor. In just over three years since she came to power unemployment has increased by over two million, from 5.4% to 14.6%. If we add in the estimates for the unemployed who are not registered (mainly women), total unemployment is now over four million people. In this project her charts have been made out by a coherent economic theory, prepared over 25 years and multinational in its scope and organization. Its first trial run at a national level was in Chile from 1973 under the guidance of General Pinochet. Not until 1979 did monetarism—for that was the theory in question—sit at the cabinet table of an advanced industrial country.

In Britain, the monetarists had made London their main bridgehead. In the mid-1960s Milton Friedman's Chicago school took over the master's economic course at the London School of Economics, whose graduates were to staff many of the country's university and polytechnic economics

^{*}This report was submitted, on behalf of the Labour Group, to the Greater London Council on 12 October 1982 and is reprinted from the Council Agenda. An appendix on redundancies has been deleted.

departments. London's financial journalists followed a few years later, together with an increasing number of city financial advisers. It was the crisis of 1974 and 1975, and the clear uncertainties of orthodox Keynesian economic policies which gave monetarism its major political opportunity. The propositions of the monetarists are simply stated: (1) That inflation is a purely monetary phenomenon and can be cured by restricting the supply of money in the economy. In practice this means raising interest rates (which reduces the demand for money) and cutting state spending to try to lower the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR). (2) That poor economic performance is the result of imperfections in the markets for 'real' products, and can be cured by removing monopolies and restrictions. The three main restrictions were held to be the unions, the state and international protectionism. Hence the attempts to weaken union power, cut and privatize state activity and remove exchange controls, the protections of a low exchange rate, and preferences for national purchasing by state bodies.

What this amounted to was an attempt to restore the value of money at the expense of wage labour. This was made explicit in the approach of the London Business School, one of whose leading monetarists became Mrs Thatcher's chief economic adviser. If inflation was a major problem then the answer was to cut state spending and the social wage. If unemployment was the issue then the way to solve it was to cut the money wage. The proposed mechanism was the following. First interest rates were to be raised. This would attract in international money which would force up the exchange rate. A high exchange rate would make exporting more difficult and attract imports. This would put pressure on firms, further squeeze their profits and make it impossible for them to agree to increases in money wages. In the corporate world, the weaker would be expected to go under, leaving the fittest to survive. The increase in unemployment would put further pressure on labour to accept lower wages and abandon improvements in working conditions which had been gained over the previous decades. Cheaper labour and higher productivity would help restore the profit rate and economic activity.

Engineering the Crisis

This was the essence of Mrs Thatcher's monetarism for the private sector. It was spelled out before the election, and on many occasions since. It has also been followed in practice. The 11% interest rate which held at the time of the Geoffrey Howe's first budget rose to 17% within a year. The exchange rate which had been at less than 1.60 dollars to the pound in late 1976, and at 2.07 at the time of the election, had risen to around 2.40 dollars to the pound by late 1980. The severe reduction in internal demand together with the adverse exchange rates squeezed all the producers of traded goods, particularly in manufacturing. Industrial output fell by 12% between 1979 and 1981. Manufacturing profits from a 1978 level of 6.8% fell to 2.1% in 1981. Unemployment rose from 1.3 million at the time of the election to 2.5 million in mid-1981 and now 3.3 million in September 1982.

Those who have gained from this conspicuously-engineered crisis have been the banks and the oil companies. Finance capital is now in the ascendancy in spite of the protests of industrial capital both privately and through the Confederation of British Industry. Crucially, monetarism has weakened labour in the private sector. With redundancies and unemployment rising, workers have had to settle for declining real wages and worsening conditions at work. Many unions found their membership falling as unemployment rose. Some of the larger industrialists indeed stuck with monetarism in spite of the squeeze because of its successful weakening of labour.

In the public sector, the manipulations of markets is a blunter instrument. High interest rates raise the cost of public services, but for the most part cannot bankrupt them. Nor can the international market be summoned to discipline the state as it has done private industry. Selling off state enterprize, even government research establishments, has been one response but is possible only with the profitable entities and they are not at issue. Privatization of services (like refuse collection) is another, whose principal success has been a decisive reduction in the security of employment. But in spite of these attempts to introduce the rule of the market into areas which had been developed by the state because of the failure of the market, the bulk of state production remains insulated from such forces. Instead, direct spending ministers, notably Mr Heseltine, have tried a succession of direct disciplines, cash limits, penalties, even threatened prosecutions. Their aims were cuts in the social wage, and in the power of labour within the state sector. But partly because of the resistance of local authorities to these measures, and partly because of the action of public-sector workers organized nationally, monetarism has been much less successful in the public as against the private sector. This was Mr Reagan's main criticism of British monetarism when he met Mrs Thatcher shortly after he became President. It was a weakness that Chile did not exhibit (they cut state employment by 30% between 1973 and 1976, and nearly halved spending on health, education and housing by mid-1975), and which Mr Reagan, too, was determined to avoid.

Finally, there was the question of the money supply itself. To Mrs Thatcher's chagrin, in the first two years of her government it kept on growing. This was in part because of state spending. In spite of the cuts, in real services, the Government's policies resulted in major increases in debt charges, unemployment and social security payments, and spending on defence. This drove up the PSBR to unprecedented levels. In addition, the squeeze of the private sector forced companies to expand their borrowing. They were buying time by mortgaging their assets, even though the new money, taken as a whole, reflected asset values which might never be realized in the market place. Inflation actually rose for a time; only after the destruction of firms and the demand for credit has inflation finally dropped. Its current level does not reflect the effectiveness of controlling the money supply directly. The Government has notably failed to do that. Rather it is by forcing the economy into a major recession that the Government has caused a collapse in the demand for money and therefore the incentive for its supply.

The Deindustrialization of London

For London labour and industry, monetarism has created the worst economic conditions for nearly a century. Though London was hit by the recession later than other parts of the country, since early 1980 unemployment has risen faster in London than in the country as a whole. While unemployment in the country as a whole has risen by 157% London's unemployment has gone up by nearly 200%. London's manufacturing industry has been decimated as factory after factory has been closed either by the receiver or by some corporate head office. The list of London redundancies of over 50 workers notified to the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) reads like a roll call of the dead. The last major industrial employers have all but disappeared from Tower Hamlets and Southwark, from Islington and Camden, from inner south-west London and from Lambeth. At this moment, the Council is trying to prevent the closure of the last major firm in Hackney and the last plant in Brent. What is striking from the map of the redundancies is how major losses are being suffered by the outer industrial boroughs, Kingston and Hounslow, Ealing and Enfield, as well as the inner city.

Most of the losses are in private sector firms, and, from the evidence we have, it was the induced slump which was the major cause of closures. The MSC conducted a survey of 21 redundancies of over 100 employees in 1981 and found that 13 of the firms gave inadequate demand as the reason for job loss. The remainder of the firms appear to have rationalized their production process, their location, or both. In 1980 the London Chamber of Commerce reported an 'unparalleled increase' in the number of firms reporting decreasing orders, though the fall in demand was notably worse domestically than on the export market, and was particularly bad in the traditional consumer-goods industries (motor and transport equipment, other metal goods, and the furniture sector). By July 1981 business expectations had picked up, but 70% of firms saw the lack of demand restricting output (compared with 40% in June 1979). In spite of a reported optimism, succeeding surveys have shown that there has been no sustained expansion of activity. By mid-1982 investment remained static, domestic orders were on average on the increase but the large firms were facing big falls in export orders 'almost verging on a collapse'. Overall, the fall in domestic orders appears to have been most severe in the period October 1979 (when 19% of firms reported decreases in orders) to July 1981, after which there was a slow upturn. Export orders and production levels followed a similar pattern. This it will be noted is the period of high exchange rates.

A further factor behind the closures was rationalization following mergers or takeovers. The MSC surveyed 124 redundancies in the second quarter of 1982 and found such rationalization accounted for 20% of the redundancies, a level consistent with their surveys over the previous 12 months. From the experience of the Council over the last six months, this general picture is confirmed. Of the ten factories facing redundancy who approached us, five faced a slump in domestic demand, one was reorganizing production in the light of a change from electro-mechanical to electronic products, and the remaining four relocated production (two to the South-West, one to Wales and the other to Scotland) as the result of over-capacity rationalization, or, in one case, a move financed by government subsidy to an area of weaker labour.

The list of redundancies also reveals a loss of public sector jobs in central

government, in public utilities and in local government. Barking (443), Lambeth (798), Bromley (836), Camden (596), Wandsworth (273), Croydon (80), Barnet (68), Lewisham (200), Havering (275), Sutton (54), and Greenwich (50): these redundancies made in response to the cuts in local government expenditure total more than 3,500 jobs, and exclude the loss of jobs accounted for by natural wastage. The loss of employment in local government has not been so severe as in manufacturing: there has been successful resistance to cuts in a number of boroughs by councillors, unions and local campaigns. But those jobs that have gone have tended to mean not merely a loss of work, but a decline of services as well.

Service industries more generally have been weakened by monetarism. Tourism which had grown in London in the 1970s was severely affected by the high exchange rates from 1979. From 8.4 million overseas visitors to London in 1978, the number fell to 7.9 million in 1979, to 7.4 million in 1980 and 6.9 million in 1981, an overall decline of 18% between 1978 and 1981. A similar slump took place in the construction industry as both public and private sectors cut their investment. In all, between 1979 and 1981 of the total redundancies reported to MSC (95,386), two-thirds were in manufacturing, and the remainder from construction and services.

What is clear from this evidence is that the current economic crisis is affecting London in a quite different way to the last great depression of the 1930s. In the 1930s the depression struck at the regions which had gained from the expansionary phases of nineteenth-century industrialization: the textile workers of Lancashire, the coal miners and steel workers of Wales, Scotland and the North and the shipbuilders of Belfast, the Clyde and the North-East. London and the Midlands were saved from the worst effects of the depression by the growth of new manufacturing. Of the increase of 644 factories in Britain between 1932 and 1937, London accounted for 1932, and this was the continuation of a trend stretching back to the early 1920s. In mid-1932 London's employment was 18% up on its 1923 level, whereas Wales—the worst hit region—was 31% down.

Yet it is these same factories which are now being closed. Hoover in Perivale and Firestone in Chiswick are two of the most celebrated names of the 1930s to have closed since 1979, but there are many more on the great industrial estates of West and North London. The results, as in the depressed regions in the 1930s, are a cut in jobs (down 8% in London between 1978 and 1982) and growing mass unemployment. In July 1982 male unemployment in Hackney was 22%, in Poplar 31% and in Stepney 32%. The unemployed of the East End do not have as far to march as the Jarrow workers in the 1930s. But their plight is increasingly similar. The inner cities are the depressed areas of the 1980s.

Women and Monetarism

Women are adversely affected by monetarism in all the ways outlined above and more. In the main, women are the managers of the household economies and in increasing proportions they are heads of households in their own right due to divorce, single parenthood and widowhood. Women have also been an increasingly important factor in bolstering family wages by the huge increase in part-time earnings, particularly among married women. Women are also the primary users of the welfare state and recipients of the social wage. Cuts in services have secondary effects on the ability of women to seek or retain employment.

National wealth is continuing to decrease. The effect of cutting the money supply is high interest rates, and low investment leading to decreased public borrowing and spending cuts in services and unemployment, reduces the Gross National Income which is comprised of wages and social wage. Depressing wage levels leads to poverty and poor work conditions. The social wage is made up of state services, such as health, public transport, education and benefits. The depression of wages that follows restricting the money supply reduces inflation and automatically reduces the value of index linked benefits. Although the overall rate of inflation is currently about 8.5% it has fallen less for people on low incomes. This is due to the rising price of commodities such as housing and public transport which take a disproportionate amount from low paid incomes.

Trends in employment and unemployment affect women and men differently because of their, on the whole, unequal relationship to the labour market. The vast majority of low paid, temporary and part-time workers in London are women. The low paid are six times more likely to be unemployed and remain unemployed. Employers have taken advantage of monetarist policies to contain and control the low paid. The Government supports this trend by abolishing protective legislation.

Destruction or Restructuring?

Mrs Thatcher claims that this forced recession is necessary. For her only the discipline of a slump would distinguish the strong firms from the weak and undermine what for her was the key imperfection in an otherwise self-balancing market system: organized labour. This fits precisely with the traditional functions of an economic slump when faced with a crisis of profitability: (i) the writing down of fictitious capital values built up during a period of expanded credit; (ii) the reorganization of production and the increase of productivity; and (iii) the weakening of the power of labour. These are the factors which have regularly restored the rate of profit and permitted accumulation to proceed. They involve a restructuring of the economy at the expense of labour.

Certainly, monetarism has partially carried out these functions. For the country as a whole real wages are now lower than they were when Mrs Thatcher came to power. In London the real earnings of manual men and women were lower in 1981 than they had been in 1977. Whereas 29,000 days were lost in labour disputes in 1979, by 1980 it was down to 12,000 and last year to 4,000. In London, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) reported that whereas in June 1979 35% of their sample firms reported that labour shortages were a constraint on output, by July 1981 the figure had fallen to 2% and strike activity to 1%. In mid-1982 one respondent was quoted as saying that there was now 'more labour available and less militant than in past 10 years'. In the private sector at least, it has proved very difficult to organize against closures or

redundancies following bankruptcies. In this sense Mrs Thatcher has been successful in using money as an instrument of control.

She has also had a modest success in writing down capital values through bankruptcy, though productivity increases have been less clear-cut. In one sample, two-fifths of the 331 firms said there had been an increase in labour productivity in the period of 1980–1, but an equal number said there had been a decrease. New investment on average remained static during the last three years, and circumstantial evidence suggests that major new manufacturing investment takes place away from London rather than within it.

But there is a real question—from the viewpoint not of labour but of private capital itself-whether restructuring and the restoration of the profit rate can any more take place through the crisis mechanisms of an earlier phase. We are no longer in the economy of the corner shop. London's economy is now intertwined in international webs of production and exchange. So severe would an international collapse of credit be that there is a real question of whether the socio-political structures of the industrial countries could survive. Even in the 1930s, the depth of that crisis, its implications for unemployment, welfare, totalitarianism and eventually war, convinced the guardians of international finance that they could no longer allow a major banking and corporate collapse. The us Federal Reserve Bank was at last constituted to act as a lender of last resort (a capacity it used to prevent a major collapse in 1974). Other central banks which had not already done so followed suit, and in 1945 Bretton Woods was set up to act as a quasi-international lender of last resort.

As the rate of profit fell in the industrial world through the sixties and seventies (in the UK the fall was sharper and earlier than most from 13% in 1960 to 2% in 1982), and as credit expanded to offset a fall in demand, so the central banks acting as guarantors of the banking system provided the state money that was at the root of inflation. What has frightened these same bankers about monetarism is that first Mrs Thatcher and then President Reagan appear bent on bringing about this credit collapse. It is striking that the Bank of England have consistently acted to modify the effect of Mrs Thatcher's monetarism on the interest rate and the money supply. Like the major clearing banks, it has operated an intensive care unit for threatened firms and organized restructuring directly rather than leaving it to the market. The Bank of International Settlements on the world scale have declared themselves in favour of incomes policy rather than the profound dangers of monetarism, and these same bankers have only with difficulty persuaded President Reagan to extend further credit through the nur to roll over Third World debts.

Economics of the Looking Glass

What the central bankers have themselves realized is the danger of an economic crisis far greater than occurred in the 1930s, and of economic policies in the us and the ux which are consistently pushing the world economy nearer that brink. In short, for a general restructuring to take place the extent of the crisis would be so large as to endanger the

economic system itself. This is a measure of the issue which is at stake with monetarism. Furthermore, in Mrs Thatcher's own terms, monetarism at a national and regional level has been an economic catastrophe. It is now clear that the extent of the damage to the British economy was much larger than anyone in the government originally intended. The increase of interest rates bankrupted some firms and forced others to borrow, thus expanding the money supply (M3). The fall in economic activity reduced tax revenue, increased unemployment payments and worsened the budget deficit but at the same time raised the cost of Government borrowing, so that the Government was borrowing more simply to service its debt. Inflation which had stood at 11.3% at the time of the first budget later reached 20%. Demand—already cut by the recession—fell further as firms reduced stocks (and therefore their intermediate demand) in the face of high interest rates. Government advisers were divided as to what was going on, but the Prime Minister carried on inflexibly regardless of the cost. The final cost in terms of employment has been a loss of 2.35 million jobs between 1979 and mid-1982. Unemployment has risen from 1.3 to 3.34 million in September 1982. While industrial production was falling in Britain from 1979 to mid-1982 by 16.5%, in France and Germany it remained constant, while in Norway it rose by 8% and in Japan by 12%. Manufacturing employment fell by nearly one-fifth in the UK, far more than that of any other industrial country.

What this has meant is that the industry destroyed by Mrs Thatcher's monetarism is leaving room on the markets not so much for the firms that remain in this country as for those who have kept up production, technical progress and investment overseas. Imports have increased so that this year Britain had a trade deficit on manufactured goods for the first time, as the *Economist* pointed out, since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. For London this is particularly serious. The output lost from the factories that are being closed is not being replaced by new factories sites in the city. Where new production is taking place it has tended to be in the smaller cities, along the M4 corridor, or in rural towns. For London the loss of these factories cannot be seen as restructuring but destruction. The point holds for the country as a whole, but even more acutely for its capital.

Nor has the reduction of real wages helped British competitivity. The exchange rate policy meant that British manufacturers lost 50% of their price competitiveness in 1979 and 1980, and have since regained only about one-third of this. While workers received less, their effective cost in relation to labour elsewhere has increased. This is the economics of the looking glass. Nor does Mrs Thatcher—from the viewpoint of those interests she represents—fully recognize the effect on national productivity of the run down of public services, of education, of health and of the transport system. Particularly serious for industry and employment has been the wilful destruction of skills and the network of Industrial Training Boards. In road transport and engineering, for example, where skills are vital to any economic revival in London, the number of apprentices nationally was halved from 2,260 to 1,100 between 1979 and 1981. Already by 1982 London's employers were reporting restrictions in output because of the shortage of suitable skills.

On almost every major issue the monetarists have been wrong in theory and in practice. They regard Britain's wages as a problem when they were among the lowest in Western Europe. They regarded taxes as a problem when they were near the average of our competitors (and when by December 1981 Mrs Thatcher's fiscal policy had according to her own figures nearly doubled the tax paid by the average family man). They saw expanded state spending as a problem when in fact many state services had actually declined in physical terms over the previous decade. They saw state debt as a problem when in fact it was at its lowest real rate for nearly a century, rising only now the monetarists' fixed interest indebtedness has increased the real rates of interest paid now that inflation has fallen. In the end they have only been able to cut the money supply and the PSBR (their two initial targets) by massive economic destruction.

To ordinary Londoners this performance appears an economy without sense. Nearly 400,000 are now registered as unemployed at a cost minimally estimated at £3,500 per head per year, or £1,400,000,000 in total. Factories lie empty, land is unused. Machines—often quite new—are frequently being sold for scrap. Ideas for new products in universities, polytechnics and both private and public industry remain undeveloped because commerce is bad. The sheer waste of it all is so evident when compared with the needs that are so patently unmet. If industrialists and the CBI protest, how much starker is the reality of this destruction to working, or would-be working, Londoners.

Restructuring for Labour

The Council is necessarily limited in its response. But in its industry and employment policy it is pointing the way to an alternative which if followed nationally and internationally alone holds promise of avoiding the catastrophe which the central bankers fear. It acknowledges that restructuring must take place but that it must be a restructuring organized on behalf of and with the support of labour rather than at its expense.

The key to this policy is technology. In most spheres there is a spectrum of new technologies, some centred on human skills, others aimed to de-skill. The Council has fostered a new programme of technology networks to make the resources of London's higher research institutions available to workers wishing to develop human-centred technologies. These will raise productivity—indeed the lathes and production systems being developed at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology promise to increase productivity more than methods which remove skill from the operator. This increased productivity is the basis for those working this new technology to be paid an adequate wage even when their product is subject to competition from low-wage countries. Whether in older plants or in new fields (such as cable development or energy production) these choices of technology and of ways of producing a given effect are quite evident to the people working there.

What has to be done first is to stop the destruction of existing jobs. We have taken the first step in this direction with our saving of Austins at

Leyton and Third Sector in Willesden. In both cases, we have advanced money to cover the cost of the factory, as well as working capital in the form of a loan. The latter has been based on the Council providing finance up to a grant limit of \pounds 20 per job week, on the grounds that an average industrial worker in London produces \pounds 160 value each week, stimulates a further \pounds 40 worth of London production through a multiplier effect, and furnishes a return to the public exchequer of on average \pounds 70 per week. A basic financial support of \pounds 20 a week is modest. What is needed is for the Government to agree to provide the equivalent of unemployment and social security benefit for each worker whose job the Council saves.

Secondly, we are seeking ways to put together the resources which have been left idle by monetarism. The new built factory programme has been a start here, but we are looking to ways of using such buildings to house production by the unemployed geared initially at each other and the Council rather than at the market. Here, the iron discipline of profit need not enter since—with wasted resources—the private economy's productivity is zero. In many job creation schemes there is a danger that every job created is also a job lost, that a new scheme financed by a public authority will merely reduce the market (and the employment) of the competitors. Within the economy of unused resources there is no such danger. Each job created is a job gained for there is no competition with the market producers.

Thirdly, we are trying to preserve some of the apprenticeship schemes run by the Industrial Training Boards and to defend the skills of which the workforce of London has been so rich a repository. The preservation and expansion of skills we see, along with many industrialists, as a necessary condition for any economic expansion, however introduced.

Finally, we see the need to develop new sectors and new products, ones geared to the real needs of ordinary Londoners. Our work on a human-centred cable system and on an alternative energy strategy for London are the first major steps in the London industrial strategy, together with detailed work in conjunction with the unions on how the furniture industry and different parts of the engineering industry can be restructured for labour.

What is needed to carry out these policies is a capacity for direct intervention in the process of restructuring companies, production methods and products. The Greater London Enterprise Board is developing this capacity, both in the corporate and technology sphere. Important, too, is the Council's programme for Popular Planning, which is aimed to ensure that ordinary people can discuss their needs as consumers, as residents or workers and can play a part in industrial restructuring. But these policies will only mitigate the effects that monetarism has visited upon London's economy. What is needed is a change of government, and the adoption not of a mere generalized reflation, but of a detailed, interventionist policy of restructuring for labour along the lines that we are developing in the Council.

E. H. Carr—A Personal Memoir

In valedictory speeches, and in one or two obituaries of E. H. Carr, the authors—independently of each other—described him as enigmatic. This struck me, and I asked myself why this very English historian seemed so enigmatic to some of his close professional colleagues. In Britain he became, towards the end of his life, something of a monument to scholarship, recognized, admired, if somewhat grudgingly, and a little neglected. But he knew long years of hostility and even ostracism not only by British Academia but also by the Establishment as a whole.

When I first met him some thirty-six years ago Carr was in the political and academic wilderness and was just embarking on his great History of the Soviet Union. It was at that time that the intellectual friendship between him and Isaac Deutscher was formed. At first sight their personal amity might seem puzzling: on one side, a self-educated former member of the Polish Communist Party—Marxist by conviction, Jewish by origin—who was a refugee from

Hitler and Stalin stranded in London; and, on the other side, an English historian who was an unmistakable product of Cambridge, a former member of the Foreign Office, schooled in a diplomatic service famous as a bastion of British traditionalism. But they were both under attack (if an attack veiled by formal respect), and both were debarred from academic posts. They were also both engaged in the study of the Soviet Union—albeit from two quite different angles: one a historian of institutions and policies, increasingly under Marxist influence; the other an unrepentent Marxist, analysing movements and ideas, surveying a society in turmoil torn by ideological battles. The 'enigma' of that friendship, and of the personality of Carr himself, becomes perhaps less perplexing once one understands the degree to which Carr was in the British tradition and yet was not quite of it; the extent to which he was an intellectual expatriate from the world of diplomacy, a rebel against his own tradition, criticizing it—as it were—from within.

When the two men first got to know each other, the cold war was just closing in. Carr had the reputation of having been an 'appeaser' before the War, and then a 'fellow-traveller' during or after it—a stigma that was, of course, a politically much more serious one at the time. It was true that, carried away by indignation against the injustices and stupidities of the Versailles settlement, he had seen Germany for long—for too long—as nothing but a defenceless victim of that settlement, and had tended to view Hitler as a run-of-the-mill statesman in revolt against it. His diplomatic training predisposed him to concentrate his attention on the state rather than to observe society, and he did not perceive the degree to which German society became degraded and corrupted by fascism. Not until 1938 did he become alerted to the dangers which Hitler's ideology and militarism presented to Europe and the world. Too much of a realist not to be aware that British antagonism to both Germany and Russia was untenable, he then turned his eyes towards the Soviet Union-which had already aroused his interest in the early 1920s. The spectacle of the Stalinist purges of 1936-1938 may have been revolting to him, but it became somewhat blurred by the undoubted economic achievements of the ussn and by the Five Year Plans which seemed to deal so effectively with the anarchy of capitalism in crisis in the West. With Russian entry into the War, the might of the Red Army could not but impress and inspire the admiration of the ex-diplomat who still remembered the sorry sight of Russia on the morrow of the First World War. Now the Soviet Union was, and would remain, an ally whose blemishes could be disregarded or excused. It was respectable to discount these while the brunt of the fighting was borne by the Russian armies in the East. But when the cease-fire sounded and our gallant ally became the villain of the peace, those who opposed the reversal of alliances were derided as fellow-travellers; and as the cold war intensified, this label became more and more damaging. Hence the isolation in which Carr started on his immense work on the ussn in these years.

Outside the 'Charmed Circle'

What eventually turned the young diplomat into the famous historian of the Soviet Union? The origins of his interest in the outcome of the October Revolution went back to his early days in the Foreign Office; for, according to his own account, it was the Revolution which decisively gave him a sense of history. By a 'lucky hunch', and also from his esprit de contradiction, he was one of those exceptional British diplomats who right from the beginning did not think the Petersburg upheaval was a flash in the pan, but believed that the Bolsheviks had come to stay. He regarded the Western reaction to this prospect as—I quote from an unpublished autobiographical memoir—'narrow, blind, and stupid'. 'I had some vague impression of the revolutionary views of Lenin and Trotsky, but knew nothing of Marxism; I had probably never heard of Marx.'

It was, however, nineteenth-century Russian literature which presented him with an ideological challenge at this time. Reading Dostoevsky, Herzen and others, he perceived for the first time 'that the liberal moralistic ideology in which I had been brought up was not, as I had always assumed, an Absolute taken for granted by the modern world, but was sharply and convincingly attacked by very intelligent people living outside the charmed circle, who looked at the world through very different eyes. . . This left me in a very confused state of mind: I reacted more and more sharply against the Western ideology, but still from a point somehow within it. (Perhaps I have never quite escaped from this dilemma.)'

This consciousness of belonging to the 'charmed circle', yet seeing the world through different eyes, of being at once part of it and rebelling against it, increased the sense of isolation which had pursued Carr since his youth. He was, as he used to say, a 'clever boy' and never doubted his ability to come out top of the class. But 'boys who always come top of the class aren't very popular with their schoolmates. This may have been one of the causes of a certain sense of "isolation"....' I think I never lost the sense of not fitting easily into my environment', he confessed. This feeling of distance was masked later in life by a kind of Olympian detachment which many took for intellectual arrogance.

I met Carr in 1946 or 1947. After Isaac's death in 1967 we maintained very friendly though more distant relations. It was during the last decade of his life that we became closely associated. For in 1972, after some preliminary meetings and correspondence, he wrote a letter to me which was in fact an appeal for help. He was then engaged on what should have been the last volume of his History, dealing with international relations in the period 1926–29. The book 'seemed to grow' in his hands. To give me some idea of his work, he enclosed a plan of the whole volume: it looked formidably daunting to me. Apart from dealing with 'diplomatic coexistence' between East and West, it also contained developments within Western Communist parties; another chapter, 'World Revolution', was devoted to the Comintern, Profintern, and the 'machinery' of these institutions (including something cryptically called 'statistics'); then followed a long list of more exotic topics about which I knew nothing: Turkey, Egypt, Afghanistan, Outer Mongolia, China, Indonesia, the Negro Question. . .

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'The amount of material which I ought to consult is enormous', he wrote, 'and I sometimes get oppressed—and depressed—with the idea that I shall never be able to finish. . Will you help me?' What was I to do except plead ignorance? How was I to help? He was somewhat vague: I won't

attempt to define exactly what I need because I need whatever you can give me—searching for material in the British Museum, in the LSE, . . . perhaps in the University Library here which has a few things'. Then, to be more persuasive, the letter resorted to an outsized dose of flattery: we should be 'meeting and talking over my drafts and criticizing and correcting them. It would be a relief to have somebody to consult, and feel I was not working entirely alone. Nobody could do this for me except you.' More convincing were his other arguments: it was true that the job I had left a few months before was silly and boring, and searching for material and discussing his drafts would be immeasurably more stimulating. 'I know that you also found your previous job tiring—with me you could at least be able to work as much or as little as you wanted and when you wanted; there would be no timetable. . .' All this was, of course, extremely attractive, though ill-defined.

The letter was also a very moving one: 'Now that I've summoned up courage, I'm impatient for an answer—but only if it's the right one!' There was something appealing in this suggestion of helplessness in a man who loomed so large as a power on the international intellectual horizon. I am so anxious about the future of my work.' I don't know how we can work together, but I'm sure we can.' To my relief the letter ended on a very matter-of-fact note: 'Have you got dates of Trotsky's correspondence with Preobrazhensky and Rakovsky about China?' It was easier to find an answer to this question than to know exactly 'how we can work together'.

In his scheme of things he would need my help for a year or so, just the time needed to finish the final, twelfth volume of his monumental Hustory. The 'last' volume grew into three, and when the complete boxed edition of the magnum opus appeared, it carried the story down to the end of 1929 and consisted of fourteen quite bulky volumes. The impact it has made on the international concourse of 'Sovietology' is well-known. The Soviet journals themselves mention it critically, their usual formula being that 'even-the-bourgois-historian Carr' knows something about the USSR; the Chinese straightsway bought forty copies of the whole set.

Long before the celebratory lunch given by the publisher on the occasion of the completion of this immense work, various files on Carr's desk contained random notes on his future labours. 'Well', he said to me, 'you see I have to keep myself occupied'. He allowed himself, however, a respite which took the form of writing with breathtaking speed The Russian Revolution from Lenin to Stalin-1917-1929. All the fourteen volumes over which he had laboured for thirty years were so fresh in his mind, that it took him no more than a few weeks to 'distill' them into two hundred pages of 'a new composition in which scarcely a sentence from the original work reappears unchanged'. He also 'kept himself busy' preparing a collection of his essays which had appeared mainly in The Times Literary Supplement since the 1950s. These preoccupations he termed 'somewhat frivolous', a word which he liked very much and which denoted for him something lighthearted and pleasurable. (The Romantic Exiles had been, he said, written 'in a frivolous mood'.) Simultaneously he was giving more and more attention to the material

which went into the making of the Twilight of the Comintern (published a few weeks after his death).

Working With Carr

Now, five or six books and ten years later, I still recall the bewilderment and uncertainty with which at first I faced the vague prospect of 'working together'. As 'it wouldn't be fair' that I should always travel to him, he proposed formightly meetings of two days alternatively in his home and in mine. I was wondering how uncomfortable at his age he might feel in my-by his standards-somewhat bohemian, unstaffed and unregulated, household. It was amazing how easily he adapted to minor disturbances to which he was not accustomed. Even a major catastrophe like a leaking ceiling in his bedroom during a night of torrential rain did not seem to affect his capacity for work next morning. A breakdown of central heating, a radio blaring on the building site outside the window, telephone calls or tradesmen at the door at the most inconvenient moment in the middle of a discussion—nothing seemed to distract him or impair his serenity. Yet he was in no way above ordinary day-to-day concerns: he always exchanged a few words with my domestic help, remembered the name of her daughter, pointed out the ments or demerits of a gardener, reminded me that the name of the man who had a year before mended the roof was Mr Murphy not Mr Miller (although he had heard the name only once). He was intensely interested in the doings—public and private—of my friends, especially the much younger ones, and even of their children. (Press notices of Susie's or Pauline's concerts were promptly dispatched to me from Cambridge.)

Ensconced in his favourite armchair, with a great number of little notes spread on the floor and coffee tables around him, he would go on writing quickly and fluently, undisturbed by interruptions and outside noises. His method of work presented some difficulties for me. His very first draft of any chapter was barely ten pages long. This is what I know, he would say. Then started the process of 'filling the gaps': a first list of questions would appear and we would discuss where I could find at least some of the answers. Where were the original sources? Were they available in this country? Could we get something from Harvard? From Feltrinelli? Who were the authors who also dealt with the topic?—And so on.

On the basis of his research and mine, he would then try to 'fill the gaps' by writing insertions: pages additional to his first draft. These insertions were, of course, of various lengths. One then had to 'insert' new material into the first set of 'insertions': these were mostly slips of flimsy paper of all shapes and sizes with old notes or letters on the reverse, covered with tiny handwriting in pen or pencil, all precariously pinned together. This, of course, played havoc with any attempt to number the pages consecutively. Such was, however, the lucidity of his composition that even when some insertion slips went astray or were temporarily 'lost', it was easy to find their place in the tightly-knit narrative. In this way the initial draft of ten pages or so would grow into a considerable text perhaps ten times the original length. Only one typist, in far-away Scotland, who worked for him for the last twenty-five years of his life, could decipher Ted Carr's manuscript. The typed text would be returned

to us for further revision—there were, of course, more gaps to be filled, more questions to be answered, and more insertions pinned on.

What also made my task a complicated one was his incredible ability to work on different parts of the book simultaneously: just when I was trying to grapple with what was supposed to be Ch'en Tu-hsiu's reports to the Central Committee of the Chinese Party in the summer of 1926, a note would arrive from Cambridge: Carr had just found that he did not have enough details about the reaction of certain Italians to the expulsion of Tasca from the PCI in 1929. At such moments I was glad indeed that, as he had said in his original letter, he 'could no longer work long hours or very fast'.

All these were, however, difficulties of a technical character and could be overcome with a little flexibility on both sides. Not so 'technical' were the difficulties which stemmed from our different approaches to historiography. Brought up in quite a different school in these matters, I was somewhat impatient with what I saw as his excessive preoccupation with constitutions, resolutions, formal programmes, official pronouncements, and so on. I thought that as these were typically all more honoured in the breach than observed in practice, it was not essential to pay so much attention to them. It seemed to me that he was attaching too much weight to the letter and perhaps not enough to the spirit of his documentation.

He would listen to my objections with patience, benevolence and an indulgent smile. Since he was 'addicted to the minutiae of precision and accuracy'—the words are his—he would challenge me to substantiate my objections. But we both knew that 'the spirit' is always by its nature so much more difficult to 'document'. He would want me to produce a quotable proof of something as elusive as a 'ferment of ideas' or a malaise permeating one or another Communist parties. But while it was a simple matter to read diligently through sets of Humanité or Pravda and make copious notes from them, it was not so simple to ascertain the state of mind of those former contributors to them—writers or party activists whose names at some point disappeared from their pages. It was one thing to summarize the substance of the speeches made at party congresses, and quite another to attempt to convey the mood of those who were expelled or debarred. True, there was usually a certain amount of political literature produced by a variety of oppositions, but it was normally not abundant nor easy to come by. The 'subversive' ideas of a minority, especially of a defeated minority, are never as well documented as those of a victorious establishment. To do full justice to these ideas required imagination and empathy.

Such were the few small difficulties of working with Carr. Immeasurably greater, however, was the satisfaction, the intellectual excitement and enrichment, that I derived from our essentially harmonious cooperation. When in my home we would stop work at about six. While I would still be ruminating—in the kitchen—over Stalin's 'Letter to *Proletarshaya Repolatsia*' or the dullness of a speech by Kuusinen, Carr would be resting. After supper we would listen to music, which was for him the best form of relaxation. He would choose a record: nearly always, Beethoven, Mozart or Schubert. Although he never played an instrument himself, he

was knowledgeable about music and had an amazing memory for it. He was delighted when the BBC invited him to be a guest on its programme Desert Island Discs. This was a pleasurably 'frivolous' distraction.

In the evenings we hardly ever discussed problems of current work. Political topics of the day were not too welcome either, though they were not barred. What was barred were all 'fundamental' philosophical discussions. He had a horror of the kind of long debates to which so many of his nineteenth-century Slavonic heroes were conspicuously addicted. He had, he said, a very long time ago settled in his own mind, once and for all, the problems of Absolutes, of Basic Principles, of Morality and Conscience, of Human Nature, and of the 'Meaning of Life'. Any kind of philosophical terminology parred on him and he would quickly put away in the farthest corner of the room any book which smacked to him of such jargon. With (mock?) humility, he never tired of insisting that he had no ability for abstract thinking. Any fleeting influence that the philosophy of Russell or Moore may have had on him during his student days at Cambridge, when he 'first heard the name of Hegel', he dismissed lightly. But he was proud of the 'flair for cutting through a load of nonsense and getting straight to the point' which he said he had learned as a classicist from A. E. Housman, whom he considered to possess 'the most powerful intellectual machinery' he had 'ever seen in action'.

The 'Amateur' Marxist

This gift for getting straight to the point enabled him to evaluate great masses of historical material very quickly, as well as to follow much contemporary historiographical and political literature. What could seem like a superficial scanning of pages gave him quite a precise idea of what was enclosed between the covers of a book. I often watched how he dealt, for example, with works submitted for the annual Deutscher Prize: within one morning he would glance at several such works, read extremely rapidly a chapter here and a fragment there, make a few notes and then produce a succinct and precise report summing up their contents and detailing his opinions of them. He had a marked preference for empirical over theoretical or 'abstract' materials. Also a preference for young writers. One characteristic comment runs: 'I am very much an amateur Marxist, and soon get out my depth. Also I may have a hidden preference for the English idiom in which I grew up, over the German-American.'

Was he a Marxist—be it an 'amateur Marxist? Was he a socialist? In time scholarly doctorates will no doubt be written proving or disproving his socialism or his Marxism. During his informal talks with me he seemed essentially a nineteenth-century liberal who had become exceedingly impatient with the anarchy of modern capitalism. For his original liberal faith did not survive the practical abandonment of free trade, the cornerstone of his political upbringing. But although in consequence he quite early became convinced of the 'bankruptcy of capitalism', 'it would be fair to say that I have always been more interested in Marxism as a method of revealing the hidden springs of thought and action, and debunking the logical and moralistic facade generally, erected around them, than in the Marxist analysis of the decline of capitalism. Capitalism

was clearly on the way out, and the precise mechanism of its downfall did not seem to me all that interesting.' He would say that he was not a Marxist only in so far as he 'could not see the Western proletariat, the progeny of Western bourgeois capitalism, as the bearer of world revolution in its next stage.'

Surveying the contemporary political scene shortly before his death, he expressed his exasperation in a brief sentence which is intelligible enough: 'The left is foolish and the right is vicious.' He was no reformist and did not believe that socialism could be attained through the machinery of bourgeois democracy, but he also deplored as an illusion the idea that the working class would in the foreseeable future be either able or willing to fight for socialism. He saw the labour movement in full retreat and was impatient with what he took to be the 'new left' and its 'theorizing about a revolutionary situation without enquiring whether it exists'. The 'unity of theory and practice', he remarked, 'cuts both ways'. In the late 1970s, he was 'shattered'—the word is his—by what he saw as the political naiveté of much of the European Left.

Eurocommunism was to him a doctrine which 'had no leg to stand on', but was making its own contribution to the outbreak of the new cold war. So, to his mind, was any excessive or uncritical preoccupation with the Soviet dissidents. On this he expressed himself with unusual sharpness in a letter: 'What can one think of "Eurocommunists" who have produced no programme of their own, but are prepared at the drop of a hat to rub shoulders with declared counter-revolutionaries (anti-Lenin, anti-Marx) and cold warriors? This must be meat and drink to hardliners in the Kremlin. Back to the "united front from Trotsky to Chamberlain"? At least Trotsky never did that.' 'Where are we going? There are too many war-mongers around the world at present for comfort. Cannot the New Left go back to Nuclear Disarmament? Also perhaps a bit naivé, but healthier.'

This kind of outburst was, however, very rare and I suspect that it may have been brought on by a general irritation with the difficulties of his daily life and his sense of failing strength. It's depressing to reflect how much more quickly, and with how much less effort I used to work'—this was becoming now, when he was well into his ninth decade, an oft repeated refrain. He was painfully aware that he had no more than a few years in front of him, and he was very anxious about the future of his work.

As time went on, remembrance of things past loomed larger and larger in our evening conversations. But unlike many an old man, he was not difficilis, querulus, landator temporis acts. Nor was he a critic or censor of the new generation. On the contrary, he was attracted by the young and felt at ease with those fifty or sixty years his juniors. He was enthusiastic about the admission of women to his college—a measure long overdue in his judgement. Unlike some of his academic colleagues, and unlike the stewards, porters and waiters of the college, he was not at all shocked by the appearance of the long-haired young fellows and dons in jeans and shirtsleeves at the high table. He did not think the young were either

more or less 'moral' or 'serious' than they had been in his days, and all bemoaning of 'our permissive society' he treated as nothing but cant.

In his reminiscences he used to go back to his pre-1914 past. His very short and cramped autobiographical sketch, written less than a year ago, begins thus: "Security" is the first word which occurs to me if I look back on my youth—security... in a sense scarcely imaginable since 1914. That year was the end of an epoch; since then Europe and the world have been plunged into a turmoil which to him was becoming increasingly frightening. Yet he fought against any mood of pessimism and gloom and did not share any apocalyptic vision of the future. The remnants of his nineteenth-century liberal optimism were still with him and continued to nourish utopian longings.

Yes, the man so often described as a Realpolitiker par excellence had his Utopia. It was a vague, undefined Utopia but, as he wrote, 'I suppose I should call it "socialist". This in no way excluded a nostalgia for the past which he perhaps expressed best in an amusing note he sent me on 9 August 1982: '80th anniversary of the Coronation of King Edward VII, postponed from June for the removal of his appendix. I was on a family holiday at Exmouth, and remember the decorations and fireworks. Why could we not go on living forever and ever in that innocent world?'

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Capital and the Nation-State: a reply to Frieden

Few writers have the good fortune to encounter such a scrupulous reviewer as Jeff Frieden. He has fairly and accurately represented the key ideas in *The Dollar and Its Rivals*, demonstrating their relevance to the debate on imperialism; and he has brought out those weak areas in my analysis which, despite attempts to remove them, are also of concern to myself. Although I am still a long way from definitive conclusions, I shall nevertheless try to clarify a number of points. Frieden thinks I am on shaky ground in adopting a 'statist' approach to the international economy. His critique falls into two parts: the first concerns the importance of private actors in the international economy, while the second stresses the composite and often conflictual character of the major interests within national capitalism (finance and industrial capital, agriculture and industry, large and small firms, producers for the internal and the external market, enterprizes and trusts, associations of independent producers, and so on). If one part of this critique is valid, it does not necessarily follow that the other holds good. On the first point, excessive weight should

not be attached to private actors, even when they take the form of multinationals or international banks. The influence of traditional free-market theory has obscured the role of governments in the international economy. For neo-classicists insist that there is no break in continuity between the internal and international markers: choices involving the maximization of household utility and enterprize profitability are supposed to determine international equilibrium as well as international trade. If an economy has problems in its relationship with the rest of the world, manifesting themselves in a balance-of-payments deficit, then international equilibrium will be restored through such automatic mechanisms as a price-variation triggered by the flow of foreign currencies or variations in the exchange-rate. According to this view, state intervention can only serve to remedy defects in the automatic mechanisms of equilibrium. Any other intervention in trade and international settlements would have a damaging effect and anyway be cancelled by the spontaneous equilibration of market forces.

In Keynesian theory, by contrast, there is no tendency to equilibrium in a country's foreign trade. Only by chance does the propensity to import of a particular country and of the rest of the world produce equilibrium at a given level of national incomes. Even exchange-rate variations are a highly imperfect instrument that does not assure a return to equilibrium in the balance of payments. From this point of view, the state plays a role in securing equilibrium through the introduction of tariffs or import controls and through the allocation of export subsidies. However, nothing prevents the state from actively fostering a balance-of-payments surplus rather than merely restoring equilibrium. Since the Keynesians clearly grasp the power of government action and the potential damage to international relations, they have always sought to exorcize the direct use of such measures by promoting multilateral, supranational organizations to regulate international trade and liquidity. Such mechanisms, albeit of a dubiously multilateral character, have been in force since the World War Two. But as I tried to show in my book, governments have still keenly pursued the national interest by exploiting the peculiar features of the system. Most observers of the international economy wrongly believe that the real role of governments, codified in the Keynesian stereotypes, has been tirelessly to defend the mechanisms that safeguard the harmony of international relations. A majority of observers argue that governments have been unable to operate the international monetary system because of the crippling problems involved; while a minority hold that the multinationals and international banks bear the main responsibility for the unhinging of the international economic order. A large number of Marxists are to be found in this latter category, but they are by no means alone. In recent years, more traditional sectors have also raised their voices against the profit-swollen banks on the grounds that they lend too much money to the developing countries without verifying their repayment capacity.

The Logic of Multinationalization

In the huge body of literature that has emerged on the multinational

^{1 &#}x27;The Dollar and Its Repuls', NLR 135 (September-October 1982).

companies, above all in the 1960s, considerable light has been thrown on such malpractices as the cross-frontier movement of production or phases of the production process; speculative attacks on national currencies; the use of 'transfer pricing' to minimize the tax burden and relocate profits; and so on. But although new evidence is continually being found, it would be a mistake to give it too much importance. In my view, no one has yet shown that the multinational diffusion of large companies and banks is a genuinely autonomous phenomenon: in other words, that the variables determining the behaviour of multinationals have a market character uninfluenced by government intervention.

The market variable per excellence is the rate of return. Yet it is well known to analysts in this field that differential profitability cannot account for the vast expansion of us multinationals in Europe during the fifties and sixties, since the post-tax rate of return of us subsidiaries in Europe was more or less the same as that of parent companies in the United States. What is more, federal tax incentives actually encouraged the multinationalization of American companies. A number of theories emphasize the advantages enjoyed by branches of us multinationals over local competitors. However, no one has elucidated in every case why overseas production should have been preferable to the export of technology. Above all, no existing theory explains the commodity composition of the new operations in Europe: the concentration of direct American investment in the consumer-goods and intermediate sectors (mainly foodstuffs, textiles, pharmaceuticals, motor-cars and petrochemicals) almost to the exclusion of capital goods. Nor does any theory fully account for a factor which, at least in the early years of multinational expansion, played a very important role in guiding company decisions: namely, the fear that the formation of the European Common Market would involve more rigid protection from us imports.

In macroeconomic terms, the arrival of American multinationals in Western Europe corresponded to a clearly defined logic. Despite major devaluations of various currencies in relation to the dollar, post-reconstruction Europe did not manage to overcome its adverse balance of trade with the United States. As the famous 'dollar gap' grew, Europe was forced to reduce its American imports in agreement with Washington, even introducing differential freight-charges that favoured West-East over East-West transatlantic shipping. This situation, which jeopardized the unity of the world capitalist market, could not have lasted for a long period of time. Anyway, the influx of direct us investment solved the problem at root, both by providing the European countries with more dollars and by reducing the trade gap to tolerable proportions through the partial substitution of us overseas production for commodity exports.³

This does not signify that American companies acted in collusion with the US government to concentrate their European investments in sectors

³ This argument is not contradicted by the fact that much investment was directed to Britain, not then a member of the EEC. For even if Britain would not have followed the EEC in a protectionist course, it already enjoyed de facto protection of its sterling-area markets. The its firms which started operations in Britain therefore tended to integrate the sterling area into the world market.

that would not excessively weaken the European economy. But it does imply something very different from the prevailing view on the European Left, according to which the multinationals were designed to raise the profits of parent companies through access to cheaper European wages or subsidization by European governments competing with one another to attract fresh investment. I am convinced that even if a microeconomic, market-centred analysis were to incorporate other factors than the rate of return, it would still be incapable of exhaustively explaining this phenomenon.

Still less is the multinationalization of the banks reducible to a purely market schema. For although less work has been done here than on the multinationalization of manufacturing companies, the few available studies of American banks demonstrate that the rate of return of their overseas subsidiaries is lower than, or at most equal to, that of the parent houses in the United States.⁴ The only coherent explanation is that American banks are following, and in some cases even preceding, their clients to the markets in which they invest or export. This process may be rationalized in terms of an urge to maximize 'turnover' or a fear of losing customers. Yet it is quite clear from the declarations of European financiers that bankers are generally very conscious of showing the flag when they expand overseas.

As to the international loans that have been such a feature of international finance in the last fifteen years, there is no proof that the interest on credits to developing countries is sufficiently higher to explain why it is they, rather than the industrialized countries, which have received virtually all the loan-finance. Interest is usually on a par with the London Interbank Offered Rate or the American prime rate, augmented by a country-risk spread. This spread has never exceeded 2%, and even then only in extreme cases such as Zaire in 1979 or Poland in Gierek's last period, where the country was technically in default. Besides, the spread has not grown markedly with the rise in interest-rates. The differential between the best and worst debtor on the internal market is certainly higher than the 1.7% recorded in international loans. Thus the difference may be as high as 12% on the Italian finance market—exceptional because of its uncompetitive and highly fragmented character—and still quite significant on the much more competitive American and British markets.

The very low differential in international finance does not justify the preference for developing over industrialized countries. To be sure, many industrialized countries have proved reluctant to store up debts, sometimes even managing to run a balance-of-payments surplus. It is also true, however, that no industrialized country has ever felt it could have reached Brazil's debt level. Given the differences in national income and the volume of exports, Brazil's debt of eighty billion dollars is equivalent to some three hundred billion for a country like Britain or Italy. On the past practice of the big international banks, it cannot be ruled out that they would, under the aegis of the us banks and subsidiaries, have

⁴ See N.S. Fieleke, "The Growth of us Banking Abroad an Analytical Survey", in Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Kry Issus in International Banking, conference series no 18, October 1977

financed those countries whose development conforms to the growth requirements of the capitalist system as a whole—that is, a form of development involving the switch from labour-intensive production to those capital goods and high-technology products for which the newly industrializing countries constitute a part of the market.

The Struggle Over the State

Of course, not all growth in the world economy of the last fifteen years can be put down to concerted action on the part of the big companies, the big banks and the us government. Still, the hypothesis of a banking-industrial-government alliance seems as worthy of attention as the 'military-industrial alliance' of the sixties. In fact, there are no grounds for arguing that banks and multinationals could devise and execute a strategy of international expansion without active government support. As is shown by recent debate on the excessive debt-levels of Latin American countries, the US administration gives at least negative support to this process. Many member countries of the IMF have demanded some form of international control over the loan system, thereby hoping to stabilize international financial brokerage against the threat of severe crises and to distribute international credits among all the developing countries in a way that no longer gives unfair advantage to the newly industrializing component. The American government, like its British and German counterparts, has firmly resisted such demands and sought to keep the international credit market free of control. My own position, which hardly deserves to be called 'statist', follows the theory of state monopoly capitalism in stressing the close collaboration between government, top finance and the big monopolies. In a vivid image that has drawn endless irony in recent decades, Lenin once defined government as 'the executive committee of the big bourgeoisie'.

This leads us on to the second aspect of Frieden's critique of 'statism': the argument that capitalist economies cannot be regarded as monolithic blocs and that interests are divided in any industrialized economy, whether between different business sectors or between social classes. For the hypothesis of a banking-industrial-government alliance to hold good, it is not necessary that all interests should be organized and satisfied, but only that coalitions of interests should prevail in each period and utilize the state apparatus to impose their own strategy. In other words, the various interests must principally assert themselves thus, through state action rather than the play of the market.

Thus, in my view, the major conflict within American capital is now between, on the one hand, forces wishing to use the strength of the us state to tighten control over the internal market and to force the other industrialized countries into passive acceptance of unilateral American measures; and, on the other hand, forces wishing to accentuate the internationalization of us capital and to use the strength of the state to thwart nationalist strategies on the part of other national capitalisms. The conflict has not yet crystallized into a clearly defined policy and both lines are present within the Reagan administration. However, the only ground for reintegration consonant with both strategies is unbridled aggressiveness towards the socialist countries. There is no liberal sector capable of

achieving a reorganization of the world economy that would give proper space to the major industrialized countries and the socialist camp, thereby safeguarding world peace. It has to be asked whether the lack of such a sector flows from the basic characteristics of the capitalist system.

It would appear that, with the possible addition of sectional agricultural interests, only big capital is represented in the strategy of the United States. Although it cannot be excluded that the American workers will succeed in exerting stronger pressure, the only way in which they will find a voice in Congress is by allying with a sector of the big bourgeoisie. The most dynamic sectors of us capital seem geared to recast industrial relations along Japanese lines, heightening the worker's integration into the firm and reducing both corporate and government social contributions. In this way, the worker's well-being would be closely tied to company performance, and higher productivity would guarantee its survival on ever more competitive international markers. Hence the American workers require an alliance with the tendentially protectionist sectors of industry linked to the internal market. I cannot share Frieden's disdainful view of such an alliance. Since the American bourgeoisie has no scruples in using the internationalization of markets and production to reinforce its own domination, defence of the internal market is the precondition for any workers' initiative.

The Contradictions of Third World Industrialization

Frieden regards as superficial my classification of developing countries into autonomous or independent countries and dependent countries. It is not my intention to present a complete analysis of Third World development. But in order to avoid further ambiguity, I shall try to clarify my interpretative schema, which is heavily influenced by dependency theory. Underdevelopment is not the result of generic backwardness, but stems from the encounter between areas in which fundamental strategic variables (accumulation, productivity, per capita income, etc.) have different values and dynamics. The area whose basic economic parameters place it at a disadvantage becomes underdeveloped and dependent, so that its rhythm of growth and the evolution of its economic structure are determined by developments in the dominant economy.

For a long time, the position of dependence condemned the developing countries to the production of raw materials, while the unprotected character of their internal market strengthened the obstacles to the growth (or survival) of any major manufacturing production. Things only changed when a number of politically independent developing countries became able to protect their internal market. Reference is often made to the Latin American countries which, during the Great Depression, introduced various import-substitution strategies in response to the collapse of profits from sales of raw materials and their resulting incapacity to acquire foreign manufactures. A more significant example, however, is the Turkey of Kemal Atatürk. Drawing inspiration from the experience of Soviet planning, he hinged the country's development on the internal market with such success that growth-rates reached 8–9% at a time when the world economy was in depression.

Nevertheless, the internal market is generally too small to allow accumulation in capital-goods sectors. Textile production only requires a market of a few hundred thousand consumers, but millions are needed if textile looms are to be produced. Breadth of the market is a two-dimensional concept which includes both the size of the population and per capita income. Furthermore, the development of technology works against autonomous growth, since economies of scale tend to push the optimum level ever higher.

Import-substitution strategies came to a standstill because of their inability to generate production in the capital-goods sector. In countries where such a strategy had been applied, the ruling classes failed to expand the internal market through support for agriculture and redistribution of agrarian income. But although the problem of land reform has remained the crucial blockage in these economies, even a serious programme would, in many cases, probably not have been enough to create a sufficiently broad internal market. Only in the exceptional case of India, where there has been no major land reform and per capita income is at a very low level, has the huge population provided a sufficiently broad market for industrialization in the capital-goods sector.

But there, too, difficulties began to appear in the late sixties and propelled a certain opening to the rest of the world. Thus, in order to import the capital goods (and often the food) it cannot produce itself, India has attempted to promote the export of manufactured goods without allowing freer access of foreign manufactures to its internal market. This effort has been assisted by the establishment of trade relations with the ussa. For some years now, the internal market seems to have played a new role thanks to the growth in agrarian incomes promised by the 'green revolution' and state subsidies and technical assistance. The development of a new layer of rich and middle farmers, together with the worsening of conditions for very small farmers and landless labourers, explains the authoritarian trends emerging ever more strongly in Indian society. At the same time, some of the stronger capitalist sectors are pressing for greater integration into the international market in the hope that they will be able to benefit more from the advantages of low production costs.

Other Third World countries are not blessed with such a broad internal market, although strong government support has enabled industrialization to proceed in many cases. Nor have they moved towards real forms of regional integration that could provide a broader market and allow greater specialization and the production of capital goods. The various common markets, free trade areas and co-operation agreements have remained little more than dead letters. The newly industrializing countries (NICs) have adopted a quite different strategy of export-oriented growth based upon their comparative advantages or, in other words, their low labour costs. In this way, they have fallen into a new form of dependency. Their growth-rates of industrial production and national income have tended to rise, together with the share of the former in the latter; but although Brazil and South Korea have become fairly important producers of capital goods, these countries have generally been incapable of fostering a large capital-goods sector. If such a breakthrough should ever be achieved, they would still not be very different from the 'semi-periphery' of industrializing countries that lag behind the oldest or most dynamic heartlands.

Export-oriented growth is certainly no universal panacea. For the markets of industrialized countries are anyway not sufficiently large to accommodate the growth of labour-intensive sectors throughout the Third World. The failure of China's 'Four Modernizations' programme is exemplary in this respect. While such rapid industrialization would have required huge imports of credit-financed capital goods, the United States was not prepared to guarantee the purchase of large quantities of Chinese textiles and other light industrial goods. Since the debt burden could not otherwise be held within non-explosive limits, China eventually had to abandon that kind of strategy.

Even countries that can reasonably aspire to autonomy are faced with a whole series of difficulties. The bourgeoisies of the industrial heartlands do not look favourably on the rise of new competitors and are making serious efforts to stabilize their domination over the emergent industrial economies, through such instruments as debt-blackmail. Thus, when a NIC has difficulty in servicing its often massive debt, international finance demands the opening of its commodity and capital markets as a precondition of any rescue operation. If the demands are accepted, large-scale industry in the industrialized countries can then penetrate its economy at leisure, either through the export of internally competitive capital goods or through direct investment in industry. Future growth patterns are thereby determined in ways which, though hard to foresee, are clearly of considerable importance. Similar problems were posed in the early stages of Italy's economic development when the bourgeoisie skilfully manoeuvred between France and Germany in order to neutralize the influence of the two regionally dominant powers. She even entered World War One on the side of France and Britain so as to sequester all enemy property and endicate the very strong German stake in Italian banking and industry.

One current object of research is whether conflict among the capitalist countries widens the room for manoeuvre available to the developing countries. It should be noted that the forced liberalization of NIC markets has not yet reached major dimensions. On the occasion of IMF loan talks a few years ago, South Korea had to allow non-residents to acquire the shares of companies quoted on the Seoul stock-exchange, but foreign share-holders will not be able to purchase a majority stake for several years to come. In Mexico, which is now under pressure to join GATT as a preliminary to any debt-rescheduling, the authorities are willing to relax much of their control over direct foreign investment.

The Strong Dollar Strategy

As to Frieden's last point, I would argue that his doubts regarding my 'predictive power' are at least partly unjustified. Although I failed to predict that the United States would adopt an opposite strategy, I did foresee that the weak dollar era would come to an end, thereby triggering a tendency to world recession. Unfortunately, the English translator used the past tense throughout the paragraph beginning on page 131 and

ending on page 132, whereas the Italian edition stuck to the future and present tenses. The translator probably thought that since events had already moved on, it was pointless to retain the predictive dimension of the original text.

The strong dollar strategy has more drawbacks than advantages for the us economy. It does help to reduce inflation, above all through the accompanying deflation, but it also debilitates America's industrial structure and undermines its competitive position. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York has calculated that the balance of us trade in manufactures will worsen by a good 45 billion dollars between 1980 and 1983. My limited knowledge of the us economy does not allow me to judge whether the current restructuring processes, induced by deflation, are sufficiently extensive to assist the strengthening of us industry. It would seem rather unlikely, even though the countless take-overs and divestitures may this time speed up the restructuring of production instead of again giving birth to conglomerates in accordance with a more finance-oriented logic of asset diversification.

American deflation is, of course, affecting the world economy through the mechanism of high interest-rates. The strong dollar also fuels inflation in the European economies, since it raises the price of dollar-invoiced imports in terms of the national currency. In Italy, for instance, the extra cost of imports attributable to the stronger dollar is equivalent to 2.5% of national income. In order to combat inflation, the European countries are adopting ever more stringent deflationary policies, which in turn have an effect upon the balance of payments. By means of savage deflation, the stronger countries have even managed to achieve a current-account surplus: Holland will end 1982 with a current surplus of some 4 billion dollars; and West Germany, having brought its current balance from -7 billion dollars in the first half of 1981 to +400 million dollars in the first half of 1982, will probably enter 1983 with a surplus of more than 5 billion dollars. Given that Britain and Switzerland are also in the black, the weaker European countries will register a very high deficit and be forced to rely, at least in part, on the surplus of the other four.

The only plausible aim of the strong dollar policy is to stir up European inflation so that a self-perpetuating inflationary process is unleashed in Germany, or to destabilize intra-European monetary relations to such an extent that the weaker countries have to abandon the BMS and introduce competitive devaluations against Germany. Neither of these objectives seems close to realization, since the German economy has stood up well despite the serious consequences for employment and the social-liberal coalition. The other European countries, including Mitterrand's France, have also now yielded and turned without protest to deflationary policies. On the fringes of the EMS, however, there have been competitive devaluations and price-and-incomes policies that make the effects still more severe. Thus Sweden has devalued the kroner by 16%, soon followed by Finland, and Yugoslavia has lopped 20% off the dinar. These moves echo last summer's devaluations of the Belgian and French francs, which, though also accompanied with a freeze on wages and prices, were held to a percentage reflecting the inflationary differential with other

countries. The commercial importance of Sweden and Yugoslavia may not be all that great, but their devaluation may spark off a chain reaction among members of the EMS.

High us interest-rates are also causing disasters in international finance. The present difficulties of many developing countries, above all the three major Latin American nations, are directly attributable to their mounting debt-burden and, in part, to the fall in export revenue bound up with world recession. Although we should not exclude the danger of a collapse of the world financial system, the immediate effect has been to arrest further growth of the new markets and to bring the structural transformation of the world economy to a standstill. Since the strongdollar policy is not yielding the expected results at an international level, it is likely to be discontinued in the not too distant future. The only other hypothesis is that it stems from the commitment of Washington policy-makers to monetarist doctrines and from the difficulties encountered in controlling the money supply. But on this hypothesis, so favoured by traditional economists, one could only wait for tight monetary policy to produce a miraculous drop in inflation and interest-rates . . . or for Reagan to change his mind.

If the United States persists in this unfruitful policy, we may witness the phenomenon to which I refer in the Preface to the new edition of *The Dollar and Its Rivals*: namely, a drift towards pan-European protectionism and the appearance of reliable European-controlled alternatives to the dollar. For its part, the United States may encourage such trends by pressing for greater protection of the American market. Fragmentation of the world market would then become a realistic prospect. Alternatively, those sectors of American capital which are anxious to maintain a unified, us-dominated world market may brandish the threat of war to force obedience from the European ally, even if this actually leads to the outbreak of a 'limited' conflict in Europe.

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CLASS, POLITICS AND THE STATE

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Göran Therborn: Which Class Wins?

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One hundred years after the death of Marx it would be impossible to draw up any simple balance-sheet of the historical destiny of the analysis and political programme to which his name has been inextricably attached. As a force in world history, Marxism today asserts its vitality in many ways: as theoretical enquiry, as the 'commonsense', in Gramsci's usage, of millions of socialist and communist militants, and as the essential framework for addressing the problems of an universal and human emancipation. In the face of a new world slump and the correlative devaluation of economic orthodoxies, the elaboration of Marxist theories of accumulation, crisis and imperialism has acquired exceptional political salience, while passages from the Grundrisse or Capital still illuminate reality with a clarity and contemporaneity which no works of the nineteenth century can continue to claim. Yet if Marx's 'Critique of Political Economy', broadly conceived, retains its pertinence to our understanding of the economic motive forces and contradictions of the age, all-important chapters remain to be written about the structures of warfare, gender, nation and state which interlace and combine with the relations of production in the movement of history. Significantly, it has been this quartet of issues that has engaged some of the most controversial and politically incisive debate within current historical materialism.

In recent years the Review has addressed each of these issues as priorities within our own publishing programme. The threat of nuclear war and the role of socialists in the peace movement has been, and will continue to be, extensively discussed. This spring Verso will publish a major study on the new cold war by Fred Halliday. In the previous issue of NLR we again touched on the crucial problematic of gender: publishing a new conceptualization of the relationship between family-forms, demography and the mode of production by Wally Seccombe. The generation of nations as 'Imagined Communities' is the subject and title of a thought-provoking analysis by Ben Anderson, which in part engages with Tom Nairn, and will also appear this spring as a Verso title. In addition we would also like to draw readers' attention to the new study by Norman Geras on 'Marx and Human Nature' announced on another page. Meanwhile in this issue we offer a trio of contributions by Erik Olin Wright, Ralph Miliband and Göran Therborn while examine, from the standpoints of the most recent discussion between Marxists and

non-Marxists in the social sciences, the complex connections between class formation, political power and the state.

As Wright emphasizes in his critical survey, Anthony Giddens's A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism must be reckoned as one of the most thoughtful and challenging assessments of Marxism by the younger generation of non-Marxist social theorists. Giddens claims that Marxism's pretense to be a theory of history is defective in three primary regards: first, its characterization of the unity of the social formation is inherently functionalist; secondly, its typology of society forms is unduly reductionist; and thirdly, its explanation of intersociety transition is evolutionist and one-dimensional. Wright, in turn, points out that Giddens's critique of functionalism is actually similar to that of many contemporary Marxists, and that his account of unique, non-universal mechanisms of historical transformation is itself unavoidably evolutionist. What most substantially differentiates Giddens's own ambitious social theory from Marxism is, according to Wright, a dualism of historical determination that makes both the accumulation of 'allocative resources' (the appropriation of labour) and of 'authoritative resources' (extra-economic coercion) independent vectors of 'space-time distanciation' (the overall configuration of power resources). Wright argues that while Giddens's case is put with originality, any theorization of the pure autonomy of state power must, eventually, concede the dependence of the technology and forms of authoritative oppression upon the development of the forces of production stricto senso, and that 'determination in the last instance' by the 'economy' (understood as the antagonistic combination of the relations and forces of production) remains a valid and necessary axiom.

In a different context—the debate over the nature of modern revolutions—a number of recent works have also asserted the radical autonomy of the state in historical causation. In particular, Theda Skocpol—in her study of the French, Russian and Chinese Revolutions—has frontally challenged Marxist historiography with what Ralph Miliband describes as a theory of the 'state for itself'. While agreeing with Skocpol and others that there are indeed impulses of state action internal and specific to the state itself—i.e. the 'self-interest' of bureaucrats and the 'national interest' in which this is legitimated—Miliband maintains that the actual degree of state autonomy is still determined by the overall development of the class struggle. In order to capture the irreducibly 'Machiavellian' dimension of state action, however, Miliband introduces the new concept of a dynamic 'partnership' between state power and class interest.

This focus on the dialectic of class formation and political power is continued in Göran Therborn's fecund text. In proposing a typology of idealtypical terrains of class struggle, ranging along a spectrum of bourgeois domination from 'ultracapitalism' to 'labourite capitalism', Therborn links the idea of localized regimes of accumulation to that of intrinsic class capacities. He also identifies three fundamental processes of hegemonic control: ethnic and religious 'displacement'; deferential and resigned 'submission'; and 'isolation'. These concepts are unified and deployed in a fascinating short sketch of the evolution of the class balance-of-power in modern Sweden as the closest approximation to the limit-case of 'labourite capitalism'.

It is not suprising that Gabriel García Márquez should have used his Nobel Prize money to sponsor an opposition newspaper in his native Colombia. As a working journalist, the renowned novelist has been a foremost chronicler of the Latin American revolution, and in past years the Review has published his memorable accounts of the Cuban expedition to Angola (NLR 101/102) and the Sandinist seizure of the national palace (NLR 111). A critical, but indefatigable partisan of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions, García Márquez is notably outspoken in his advocacy of a 'Latin American' model of socialism. We print here an excerpt from 'Fragrance of Guava', the extraordinary series of conversations between him and the novelist Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza which Verso is publishing this spring.

Finally, Yvonne Kapp, author of the well-known biography of Eleanor Marx, provides a compassionate glimpse inside the Marx household during the years from Soho to Maitland Road.

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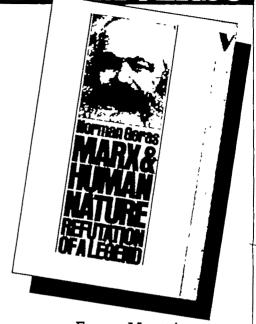
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Available from bookshops everywhere or from Verso, 18 Greek Street, London W1V SLF Gabriel García Márquez Talks to Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza*

'Our Own Brand of Socialism'

Can we look back over the way your political ideas have developed? Your father is a Conservative. In Colombia we say being a Conservative or Liberal depends on what your father is, but yours obviously didn't influence your politics at all because you opted for the left very early on. Was this political stance a reaction against your family?

Not against my family as such because you must remember that, although my father is a Conservative, my grandfather the Colonel was a Liberal. My political ideas probably came from him to begin with because, instead of telling me fairy-tales when I was young, he would regale me with horrifying accounts of the last civil war that free-thinkers and anti-clerics waged against the Conservative government. My grandfather also told me about the massacre of the banana workers which took place in Aracataca the year I was born. So you see my family influenced me towards rebellion rather than towards upholding the established order.

5

Do you remember where and when you read your first political texts?

In my secondary school in Zipaquira. It was full of teachers who'd been taught by a Marxist in the Teachers Training College under President Alfonso López's leftist government in the thirties. The algebra teacher would give us classes on historical materialism during break, the chemistry teacher would lend us books by Lenin and the history teacher would tell us about the class struggle. When I left that icy prison I'd no idea where north and south were but I did have two very strong convictions. One was that good novels must be a poetic transposition of reality, and the other was that mankind's immediate future lay in socialism.

Did you ever belong to the Communist Party?

I belonged to a cell for a short time when I was twenty, but I don't remember doing anything of interest. I was more of a sympathizer than a real militant. Since then my relationship with the Communists has had many ups and downs. We've often been at loggerheads because every time I adopt a stance they don't like, their newspapers really have a go at me. But I've never publicly condemned them, even at the worst moments.

You and I travelled around East Germany together in 1957 and, in spite of the fact we'd pinned out hopes on socialism, we did not like what we saw. Did that trip alter your political conviction?

It did affect my political ideas quite decisively. If you think back, I put my impressions of that trip on record at the time in a series of articles for a Bogotá magazine. The articles were pirated and published some twenty years later—not, I imagine, out of any journalistic or political interest, but to show up the supposed contradictions in my personal political development.

Were there any contradictions?

No, there were not. I made the book legal and included it in the volumes of my complete works which are sold in popular editions on every street corner in Colombia. I haven't changed a single word. What's more, I think an explanation of the origins of the current Polish crisis is to be found in those articles which the dogmatists of the time said were paid for by the United States. The amusing thing is that those dogmatists today, twenty-four years later, are ensconced in the comfortable armchairs of the bourgeois political and financial establishment while history is proving me right.

^{*} From The Fragrance of Gume: Cabrul Carrie Marquez in conversation with Plane Apulaye Mondaya, VERSO, London 1983, £8 95 hardback, £2.95 paper.

¹ Colombia went through a century of intermittent civil war after its independence from Spain in 1819. Two political parties crystallized in the 1840s, the Conservatives whose traditionalist philosophy was based on family, church and state; and the Liberals who were free-thinkers, anti-clerical and economic liberals. The bloodiest of the wars between these two parties was the 'War of The Thousand Days' (1899–1902) which left the country bankrupt and devastated.

And what did you think of the so-called Peoples' Democracies?

The central premise of those articles is that the Peoples' Democracies were not authentically socialist nor would they ever be if they followed the path they were on, because the system did not recognize the specific conditions prevailing in each country. It was a system imposed from the outside by the Soviet Union through dogmatic, unimaginative local Communist Parties whose sole thought was to enforce the Soviet model in a society where it did not fit.

Let's move on to another of our shared experiences—our days in Prensa Latina, the Cuban news agency. You and I both resigned when the old Cuban Communist Party began taking over many of the institutions of the Revolution. Do you think we made the right decision? Or do you think it was just a hiccorp in a long process which we failed to see as such?

I think our decision to leave Prensa Latina was correct. If we'd stayed on, with our views, we'd have ended up being slung out with one of those labels on our forehead—counter-revolutionary, imperialist lackey and so on—that the dogmatists of the day used to stick on you. What I did, if you remember, was to remove myself to the sidelines. I watched the evolution of the Cuban process closely and carefully while I wrote my books and filmstrips in Mexico. My view is that although the Revolution took a difficult and sometimes contradictory course after the initial stormy upheavals, it still offers the prospect of a social order which is more democratic, more just and more suited to our needs.

Are you sure? Don't the same causes produce the same effects? If Cuba adopts the Soviet system as a model (one-party-state, democratic centralism, government-controlled unions, security organizations exercising a tight control over the population), won't the 'just, democratic order' be as difficult to achieve there as it is in the Soviet Union? Aren't you afraid of this?

The problem with this analysis is its point of departure. You start from the premise that Cuba is a Soviet satellite and I do not believe it is. I think that the Cuban Revolution has been in a state of emergency for twenty years thanks to the hostility and incomprehension of the United States, who will not tolerate an alternative system of government ninety miles off the Florida coast. This is not the fault of the Soviet Union, without whose assistance (whatever its motives and aims may be) the Cuban Revolution would not exist today. While hostility persists, the situation in Cuba can only be judged in terms of a state of emergency which forces them to act defensively and outside their natural historical, geographical and cultural sphere of interest. When the situation returns to normal, we can discuss it again.

Fidel Castro supported Soviet intervention in Crechoslovakia in 1968 (with certain reservations it is true). What position did you take?

I made a public protest at the time and would do the same again should the same situation arise. The only difference between my position and Fidel Castro's (we don't see eye to eye on everything) is that he ended up justifying Soviet intervention and I never would. However, the analysis he made in his speech on the internal situation of the Peoples' Democracies was much more critical and forceful than the one I made in the articles we were talking about a moment ago. In any case, the future of Latin America is not and never will be played out in Hungary, Poland or Czechoslovakia, but in Latin America itself. To think anything else is a European obsession; and some of your political questions smack of this obsession too.

In the seventies after the Cuban poet Heberto Padilla's famous self-criticism,² some of your friends, myself included, distanced ourselves from the Cuban regime. You didn't. You didn't sign the telegram of protest we sent, you went back to Cuba and became a friend of Fidel. What made you adopt a much more favourable attitude towards the Cuban regime?

Better information about what really happened, and a mature political outlook which made it possible for me to view the situation with more calm, patience and human understanding.

A great many writers in Latin America besides yourself talk of socialism (Marxist-Leninist) as a desirable alternative. Don't you think this is rather 'old-fashioned' socialism somehow? Socialism is no longer a generous abstraction but a rather unattractive reality. Do your agree that after what has happened in Poland, nobody can believe that the working class is in power in those countries. Can you see a third option for our continent between decadent capitalism and decadent 'socialism'?

I don't believe in a third option. I believe there are many alternatives—perhaps even as many alternatives as there are countries in our Americas, including the United States. I am convinced that we have to find our own solutions. We can benefit, wherever possible, from what other continents have achieved in their long turbulent histories but we must not go on copying them mechanically as we have done until now. This is how we can eventually achieve our own brand of socialism.

Talking of other options, what role do you see Mitterrand's government playing in Latin America?

At a lunch in Mexico recently, President Mitterrand asked a group of writers, 'What do you expect from France? Their reply provoked a discussion which veered towards who was the principal enemy of whom. The Europeans at the table, convinced that they were on the brink of some new Yalta-style carve up of the world, said their principal enemy was the United States. I answered the President's question (the same one you are asking now) by saying, 'Since we each have our own Enemy Number One, what we need in Latin America is a Friend Number One. Socialist France can be that friend.'

² 1971 Padilla was detained by security police to discuss 'suspect' political attitudes in his work, and released a month later after publicly confessing counter-revolutionary tendencies. This launched a flood of criticism by European and Latin-American intellectuals. The event was seen as a watershed in the relationship between writers and the Revolution—either as the emergence of latent Stalinism, or as proof of the bourgeois intellectual betraying its duty to stand by a revolution under siege.

Do you believe that democracy as it exists in the developed capitalist countries is possible in the Third World?

Democracy in the developed world is a product of their own development and not the other way round. To try and implant it in its raw state in countries (like those of Latin America) with quite different cultures is as mimetic and unrealistic as trying to implant the Soviet system there.

So you think democracy is a kind of luxury for rich countries? Remember that democracy carries with it the defence of human rights for which you fought so. . .

I'm not talking about democratic principles but democratic forms.

Incidentally what is the result of your long battle for human rights in terms of success and failure?

It is very difficult to measure. There are no precise or immediate results with work like mine in the field of human rights. They often come when you're least expecting them and due to a combination of factors where it is impossible to assess the part played by your own particular action. This work is a lesson in humility for a famous writer like me, who is used to success.

Which of all the actions you're undertaken has given you the most satisfaction?

The action which gave me the most immediate personal satisfaction was one I undertook just before the Sandinist victory in Nicaragua. Tomás Borge, who is now the Interior Minister, asked me to think up a good way of putting pressure on Somoza to allow his wife and seven-year-old daughter to leave the Colombian Embassy in Managua where they had asked for asylum. The dictator was refusing them a safe conduct, because they were the family of no less a person than the last surviving founder-member of the Sandinist Front. Tomás Borge and I turned the problem over for several hours until we came up with a useful point the little girl had once had a kidney infection. We asked a doctor how her present conditions would affect this, and his answer gave us the argument we were looking for. Less than forty-eight hours later, mother and daughter were in Mexico, thanks to a safe conduct granted on humanitarian, not political, grounds.

My most discouraging case, on the other hand, was when I helped free two English bankers who'd been kidnapped by guerrillas in El Salvador in 1979. Their names were Ian Massie and Michael Chaterton, and they were going to be executed within forty-eight hours because no agreement had been reached between the two parties. General Omar Torrijos telephoned me on behalf of the kidnapped men's families and asked me to help save them. I relayed the message to the guerrillas through numerous intermediaries and it arrived in time. I promised to arrange for the ransom negotiations to resume immediately, and they agreed. Then I asked Graham Greene, who lives in Antibes, to make the contacts on the English side. The negotiations between the guerrillas and the bank lasted for four months. It had been agreed that neither Graham Greene nor I would take any part in the actual negotiations but, whenever there was a

hitch, one side or the other would get in contact with me to try and get the talks going again. The bankers were freed but neither Graham Greene nor myself received a single word of thanks. It wasn't very important, of course, but I was rather surprised. After a lot of thought, I came up with an explanation — Green and I had arranged things so well that the English must have thought we were in cahoots with the guerrillas.

Many people look on you as a sort of rowing ambassador in the Caribbean. A goodwill ambassador of course. You're a personal friend of Castro but also of Torrijos in Panamá, of Carlos Andrés Pérez in Venezuela, of Alfonso López Michelson in Colombia, of the Sandinists in Nicaragna. . . You are a privileged interlocutor to all of them. What motivates you to adopt this role?

The three figures you mention were in power at the same time—a very crucial time for the Caribbean. It was a very fortunate coincidence, and a great pity that they could not have cooperated as they did for longer. There was a moment when the three of them, working with Castro and a President like Jimmy Carter in the United States could, without a doubt, have put this area of conflict on the right track. There was a continuous, very positive dialogue taking place among them. I not only witnessed it but helped in it whenever I could. I think that Central America and the Caribbean (for me they are one and the same thing and I don't understand why they are called two different things) have reached a stage of development and a point in their history when they are ready to break out of their traditional stagnation; but I also believe that the United States will frustrate any such attempt because it means giving up very old and important privileges. For all his limitations, Carter was the best party to this dialogue the Caribbean has had in the last few years and the fact that his Presidency coincided with that of Torrijos, Carlos Andrés Pérez and López Michelsen was very important indeed. It was this particular situation and conviction which encouraged me to get involved, however modestly. My role was simply that of an unofficial intermediary in a process which would have gone a lot further had it not been for the catastrophic election of an American President who represents diametrically opposite interests. Tornjos used to say that my work was 'secret diplomacy', and he often said in public that I had a way of making bad news seem like good. I never knew if this was a reproach or a compliment.

What type of government would you like to see in your own country?

Any government which would make the poor happy. Just think of it!

Giddens's Critique of Marxism

Critiques of historical materialism tend to be one of two types: either they are hostile attacks by anti-Marxists intent on demonstrating the falsity, perniciousness or theoretical anachronism of Marxism, or they are reconstructive critiques from within the Marxist tradition attempting to overcome theoretical weaknesses in order to advance the Marxist project. In these terms, Anthony Giddens's book, A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, is a rare work: an appreciative critique by a non-Marxist of the Marxist tradition in social theory. While finding a great deal that is wrong with basic assumptions and general propositions in Marxism, Giddens also argues that 'Marx's analysis of the mechanisms of capitalist production. . . . remains the necessary core of any attempt to come to terms with the massive transformations that have swept the world since the eighteenth century.' Indeed, there are certain specific discussions in the book—such as the use of the labour theory of value and the analysis of the capitalist labour process—in which Giddens's position is closer than many contemporary Marxists' to orthodox Marxism. The book is thus not a wholesale rejection of Marxism, but rather an attempt at a genuine 'critique'

in the best sense of the word—a deciphering of the underlying limitations of a social theory in order to appropriate in an alternative framework what is valuable in it. While, as I attempt to show, I think many of Giddens's specific arguments against historical materialism are unsatisfactory, the book is a serious engagement with Marxism and deserves a serious reading by both Marxists and non-Marxists.

Overview of Giddens's Argument

The critiques elaborated in A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism are rooted in Giddens's general theory of social structure and agency, his theory of 'social structuration'. This framework involves complex, and sometimes obscure, prescriptions about what a good social theory must contain. Among other things, Giddens argues, social theories must recognize the knowledgeability and competence of actors; they must be built around a concept of the 'duality of structure', in which social structures are viewed as both the medium and outcome of the practices which constitute social systems; temporality must be treated as an intrinsic dimension of social processes; human action must be understood as involving conscious intentionality as well as 'practical consciousness', practical knowledge of the workings of society that are discursively inaccessible to actors; and all action must be situated within the unacknowledged conditions of action and the unintended consequences of action. These guidelines to theorizing constitute the heart of Giddens's ambitious attempt at building a radical critical sociology.

This general framework is laid out in the Introduction and first two chapters of the book. Many readers will find parts of these chapters extremely dense. Very few readers, I imagine, will understand what is meant by a sentence like: 'The chronic interpenetration of presence and absence, the symbolic interpolation of the absent within the presence of the continuity of everyday activities, is a peculiar characteristic of human social life as contrasted to that of animals'. 2 Giddens directs the reader to his earlier work, Central Problems of Social Theory, 3 for clarifications of this conceptual apparatus, but unfortunately that earlier book is even more difficult to decipher than A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism. Fortunately, once the more schematic conceptual discussions at the beginning of the book are finished, most of the rest of A Contemporary Critique is clear and engaging. And while the arguments throughout the book do draw on concepts introduced in the more opaque discussions, nevertheless the book can be fruitfully read even if the introductory conceptual material is not fully understood.

In this essay I will not attempt a general assessment and summary of the theory of social structuration itself. Instead I will focus on the core theme of the book: the critique of the Marxist account of the forms and development of societies and the elaboration of some of the essential elements of an alternative macro-structural theory.

¹ Macmillan, London 1982, p 1 (hereafter CC)

^{&#}x27;сс,р зу

³ University of California, Berkeley 1979 (hereafter CP)

The heart of Giddens's argument revolves around three interconnected problems: (1) The methodological principles for analysing the interconnectedness of different aspects of society within a social whole or 'totality'; (2) the strategy for elaborating classification typologies of forms of societies; and (3) the theory of the movement or transition of societies from one form to another within such a typology. Giddens criticizes what he considers to be the Marxist treatment of each of these issues: functionalism in Marxist analyses of the social totality; economic or class reductionism in the typologies of societies rooted in the concept of mode of production; and evolutionism in the theory of the transformation of social forms. In place of these central errors, Giddens offers the rudiments of his general theory of social structuration: instead of functionalism, social totalities are analysed as contingently reproduced social systems; instead of class and economic reductionism, forms of society are differentiated on the basis of a multidimensional concept of 'space-time distanciation'; and instead of evolutionism, transformations of social forms are understood in terms of what Giddens calls 'episodic transitions'. These critiques and alternatives are summarized in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
Summary of Giddens's Critique of Historical Materialism

		Central Marxist Cencept	Guldens's Cristague	Guldens's Alternative
I	Logic of Interconnection of Social Whole	Functional Totality	Functionalism	Contingently Reproduced Social System
2	Typology of Social Forms	Mode of Production	Class and Economic Reductionism	Level of Space-Time Distanciation
3	Logic of Transformation	Dialectic of Forces and Relations of Production	Evolutionism	Episodic Transitions

To anticipate briefly my assessment of each of these general arguments: (1) Giddens's critique of functionalism in Marxism is largely correct, although his discussion is somewhat misleading in ignoring the growing Marxist critique of functional explanations in historical materialism. (2) Giddens's critique of class reductionism in social typologies is less satisfactory. On the one hand, his own proposal is not as sharply different from traditional Marxist treatments of social forms as he imagines, and on the other, his rejection of the Marxist typology rests on a characterization of the Marxist concept of 'class' which many Marxists do not share. (3) The critique of evolutionism is the least satisfactory. While Giddens is correct in rejecting strong forms of teleological evolutionary theory (in its Marxist and non-Marxist incarnations), I think his general rejection of weaker forms of evolutionary theory is unjustified. Indeed, as I shall argue, Giddens's own approach to social change should be viewed as a type of evolutionary theory. What is at issue, then, in his critique of historical materialism is two competing evolutionary arguments. Those will be my central conclusions. Now let us look in some detail at each of the arguments.

I. Functionalism and the Social Totality

Giddens correctly observes that much Marxist work can be characterized as covertly functionalist. This functionalism takes a variety of forms. In classical Marxism the base-superstructure metaphor is essentially a type of functional explanation: the state, for example, is explained by the functional requirements generated by class relations. In the work of Althusser, functionalism is smuggled in under the rubric of 'reproduction' and 'structural causality'. The form of ideological apparatuses, for example, is explained by the requirements for reproducing the relations of production. In many current Marxist discussions, explanations of racism and sexism take the form of functional arguments about their beneficial effects for increasing the rate of profit or dividing the working class. In somewhat more obscure ways, analyses of society as an 'expressive totality' or attempts by Marxists in the 'capital logic' school to 'derive' properties of capitalist society from the category 'capital' can also be viewed as implicit functional explanations, since the logic of 'expression' or 'derivation' is essentially based on the requirements for reproducing the social whole. The fact that most of these analyses also contain discussions of contradictions and conflicts does not negate the fact that in all of these cases, various properties of society are explained by their functions within the social totality.

Giddens criticizes such functional explanations on a variety of familiar grounds: functionalist explanations rest on a false division between statics and dynamics; they tend to turn human actors into mere bearers of social relations, lacking any knowledge or intentionality; and, most importantly in Giddens's view, they falsely impute 'needs' to social systems. Thus, for example, Giddens criticizes attempts by Marxists to explain unemployment in terms of the 'needs' of capitalism for a reserve army of labor. The only way Giddens feels in which functional arguments can be legitimately employed in social science is when such arguments are treated in a strictly counterfactual manner: 'We can quite legitimately pose conjectural questions such as "What would have to be the case for social system x to come about, persist or be transformed?" But stating such conditions of existence does not constitute an explanation of anything; they merely point the direction towards what needs explaining.

Giddens is, I believe, substantially correct in both his assessment of the functionalist tendencies within Marxism and in his critique of those tendencies. Social reproduction should always be understood as a contingent reality in need of explanation rather than as an automatically guaranteed process. While in some cases functional descriptions may be heuristically useful—i.e. descriptions of how a particular institution or structure in fact does reproduce class relations—such descriptions are never in and of themselves explanations.

Selection Mechanisms and Feedback Processes

In spite of my agreement with the main thrust of Giddens's arguments about functionalism, nevertheless his discussion of the problem is in

⁴ cc, p. 18. ⁵ Ibal, p. 19.

certain respects misleading. First of all, he writes as if Marxists have largely ignored this problem, whereas in fact a great deal of the critical debate within Marxism in the past decade has resolved around the problem of functionalism. This has been the case in the discussions of work by Althusser and other 'structuralist' Marxists, but the problem of functionalism has been raised in numerous other contexts as well. It is particularly surprising in this context that Giddens does not discuss in this book the most sustained defence of functional explanations in historical materialism, G.A. Cohen's Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence (1978), or the debate over functionalism and Marxism which this book has inspired.

Secondly, while I think that Giddens is correct in being suspicious of the way writers slide from functional descriptions to functional explanations, I think he is wrong totally to dismiss the term 'function' from explanations of social phenomena. While the functionality of a given institution or practice is never a complete explanation of that institution, I see no reason why arguments about functionality cannot constitute an aspect of a proper explanation. Take the problem of the state, for example. Marxists often attempt to explain particular state policies in terms of their 'function' for capital accumulation. Giddens would not deny that many policies do reproduce conditions favourable for accumulation; what he objects to is the functional form of the explanation of such policies. The explanation, he would argue, should be sought in the practices and strategies of actors who intentionally create such policies with an eye to their consequences. While of course there may be unintended consequences to state policies, and it may even happen that such unintended consequences are reproductive, the unintended consequences cannot ever be explanations of the policies themselves; the explanations always have to work through intentional practices of actors.

The fact that intentionality is always implicated in such explanations, however, does not mean that there cannot also be nonintentional causal 'feedback' processes at work which reinforce or undermine a given state policies unfavourable to private profits and private accumulation, a causal what they are. For example, given the institutional separation of the state apparatuses from production in capitalist societies, if the state engages in policies unfavorable to private profits and private accumulation, a causal chain will be set in motion: economic conditions will deteriorate, unemployment will tend to rise, the tax base of the state will tend to erode and thus fiscal pressures on the state increase, etc. These conditions, in turn, will shape the kinds of intentional strategies in which actors will engage, and these strategies (including the strategies of state actors) will tend to produce changes in the disruptive state policies. The critical point is that while intentions play a central role in this process, the fact that the intentions of actors take this form is itself explained by the structural

⁶ For contributions to this debate, cf. Jon Elster, Ulysses and the Street, Cambridge 1979, and 'Cohen on Mark's Theory of History', Political Studies XXVIII:1 (March 1980), pp. 121–28; Joshua Cohen, 'Review of Kerl Mark's Theory of History: a Defense', The Journal of Philosophy, 1982, pp. 253–73; and Andrew Levine and Erik Olin Wright, 'Ranonality and Class Struggle', NLR 123 (September/October 1980) Subsequent to the publication of A Contemporary Critique, Giddens did directly address this debate in a special issue of the journal Theory and Society (July 1982)

properties of the system, and thus there is a meaningful sense in which one can say that these structural properties, and not just the intentions, 'explain' why state policies in fact tend to favour private accumulation. Thus, given a specification of the institutional context of state policies, functional arguments within explanations are not in principle illegitimate.⁷

The critical step in this argument is the specification of the institutional context within which such functional explanations are made. The argument is that institutions may be organized in such a way that they have built in to them certain 'negative selection mechanisms', to use Claus Offe's formulation. Such mechanisms, once in place, provide for the causal feedback processes needed to generate functional relationships. Of course, such institutional forms are themselves the result of intentional practices. But this fact does not mean that once in place they cannot filter policies in a manner that is, in an on-going way, not regulated by intentions and which nevertheless is systematically functional. In such contexts, a functional element within the explanation of a given policy seems entirely appropriate.

To say this, of course, does not prejudge the question of whether or not in any particular case a functional argument is correct. In fact, there are good reasons to be suspicious of such arguments. In general it seems to me that the 'filter mechanisms' inscribed in institutional forms of the state are much less effective, much more internally contradictory and much more contingent upon particular forms of class conflict than is suggested by Marxists who adopt such functional reasoning. I would thus agree with Giddens that functional arguments are often dubious. But this is because they are substantively wrong, not because a priori no explanation can legitimately contain functional reasoning.

Indeed, it is possible to identify some social contexts within which full-fledged functional explanations are possible in social science. Jon Elster, himself a vigorous opponent of functionalism, gives a clear example in his discussion of profit-maximizing strategies of capitalist firms. Elster argues that it is appropriate to use a functional explanation to answer the question, 'Why do capitalist firms adopt on average profit-maximizing strategies?' His argument is that the market acts as a

⁷ This assertion, of course, presumes that functional explanations are not in principle illegitimate on philosophical grounds. There are, of course, philosophers of science who reject functional explanations in general, even in biology. Functional explanations in biology generally take the following form a particular trut of an organism is explained by the functions it fulfills for the organism, i.e. by the beneficial effects it has on the probabilities of the organism surviving (or more precisely, reproducing). Such explanations rest on what G A. Cohen has called 'dispositional facts' about the organism, namely that it is a property of the organism prior to acquiring the desirable trait that such traits would enhance its survival rate. Such dispositional facts make it possible to reconcile the normal meaning of 'causation' in which causes are temporally prior to effects, with functional explanations, in which effects are taken to explain the structures which produce them. If one rejects such reasoning for biology, then functional explanations of any sort are impermissable in social science Giddens, however, does not appear to reject functional explanations in biology, since his critique of sociological functionalism is precisely that it treats societies as 'organisms' with 'needs' Elster, Uhuu, p. 31.

selection mechanism which eliminates firms that adopt sub-optimal strategies. After a sufficiently long operation of the market, only those firms which happened to adopt profit-maximizing strategies will survive. Thus, even though the decision-making procedures within capitalist firms operate on 'rough-and-ready rules of thumb', only those particular rules of thumb which happen coincidentally to maximize profits will survive over time. The end result, therefore, will be a distribution of strategies among firms which are generally functional for the reproduction of those firms, even though such a distribution was not intended by any actor within the system. Of course, it may empirically happen that some capitalists consciously attempt to adopt profit-maximizing strategies. Elster's point is that we need not assume that they do so in order to understand how the functional outcome is possible. Conscious profitmaximization may improve the efficiency of the selection mechanisms, but the functional relationship is itself structurally ensured through the operation of the market. A functional explanation of profit-maximizing strategies by firms (profit-maximization is explained by its consequences for the survival of firms) is thus justified in this case.

As Elster stresses, there are relatively few social processes which have the properties of firms acting in a competitive market, and thus it is generally not the case that genuine selection mechanisms operate to produce functional relations. Functional explanations by themselves are usually unsatisfactory precisely because no plausible mechanism for regulating the functional outcome can be posited. Giddens is therefore quite justified to be suspicious of functional explanations. His categorical rejection of any use of functional arguments within social explanations, however, is unwarranted.

II. Typologies of Social Forms

At the heart of Marxist theory lies a particular strategy for classifying societies. In one way or another, all Marxists root their typologies of social forms in the concept of class structure, which is itself based on the concept of mode of production. While there are substantial disagreements over how the concept of mode of production should be defined and precisely how class structures should be distinguished, there is a general agreement among Marxists that these concepts provide the central principle both for differentiating types of societies and for providing a road map of the historical trajectory of societal transformations. Even where Marxists allow a great deal of room for the autonomy of relations of domination other than class (e.g. ethnic, gender, national), they nevertheless characterize the overall form of society primarily in terms of its class structure. A great deal of Giddens's book is devoted to challenging this principle of social typology. The accusation that historical materialism is an economic or class reductionist theory is, of course, a standard criticism. What is unusual about Giddens's position is that he rejects class-based typologies of societies without challenging the importance of class analysis in general.

Giddens raises the critique of reductionism in two contexts: first, he insists that only in capitalism can class be viewed as the central structural principle of the society as a whole, and thus class structure provides an

inadequate general basis for specifying the pivotal differences between social forms; and second, he argues that societies are characterized by multiple forms of domination and exploitation which cannot be reduced to a single principle, class. The first of these can be termed the critique of intersocietal class reductionism; the second, of intrasocietal class reductionism. Since Giddens spends so much more time discussing the first of these, I will concentrate on it below.

(A) Intersocietal Class Reductionism

Societies should not be primarily classified in terms of their class structures, Giddens argues, because only in capitalism is it the case that class constitutes the basic structural principle of the society. Only in capitalism does class permeate all aspects of social life. While various forms of noncapitalist society may have had classes, class relations did not constitute their core principle of social organization. This argument forms the basis of the pivotal distinction Giddens makes between class society (a society within which class is the central structural principle) and class-divided society ('a society in which there are classes, but where class analysis does not serve as a basis for identifying the basic structural principle of organization of that society').

Giddens's defence of this proposition revolves around his analysis of power and domination. Power, in Giddens's theory of 'social structuration' is defined as a subcategory of transformative capacity, in which 'transformative capacity is barnessed to actors' attempts to get others to comply with their wants. Power, in this relational sense, concerns the capacity of actors to secure outcomes where the realization of these outcomes depends upon the agency of others.' This relational transformative capacity rests on specific kinds of resources which are used to get others to comply. In particular, Giddens distinguishes between allocative resources (resources involving control over nature) and authoritative resources (resources involving control over social interactions of various sorts). Domination is then defined as 'structured asymmetries of resources drawn upon and reconstituted in such power relations'. On the basis of these concepts societies can be classified along two principal dimensions:

- (1) Which type of resource domination, allocative or authoritative, is most important for sustaining power relations. Giddens argues that it is only in capitalism that control over allocative resources per so is of prime importance. In all noncapitalist societies 'authoritative resources were the main basis of both political and economic power'. 12
- (2) The magnitude of control over each of these resources in time and space. This is the core of Giddens's complex concept of 'space-time distanciation'. The control over any resource can be specified in terms of its extension over time and space. This is easiest to understand in terms of allocative resources. Hunting and gathering societies involve rather limited control over allocative resources in both time and space: food is continually acquired in the present with relatively short time horizons, and trade over

⁹ cc, p 108. ¹⁰ cp, p 93. ¹¹ cc, p 30 ¹² Ibal, p. 108

long distances (spatial extension of allocative resources) is very limited. On both of these counts, settled agriculture involves greater space-time 'distanciation'. And industrial capitalism, of course, extends this to historically unprecedented levels: production is organized globally and allocative time horizons extend over decades in some cases. In terms of authoritative resources, the central basis for the extension over time and space is the increasing capacity of a society for surveillance: for the gathering and storing of information and for the supervising of subordinate groups. The basic institutional sites for this extension of authoritative resources in time and space are initially the city and subsequently the state. ¹³

Taking these dimensions together produces the general typology of societal forms in Table 2. This is certainly a different kind of typology from the usual Marxist typology of modes of production. But are the two really completely incompatible? Giddens certainly believes that they are. Nevertheless, I think that the distance may not be quite so great as Giddens imagines.

TABLE 1
Giddens's Typology of Social Forms
TYPE OF RESOURCE WHICH IS
THE PRIMARY BASIS OF POWER

		Anthoritative	Allocative
LEVEL OF SPACE-	Lew	Tribal So	cieues
TIME DISTAN- CIATION	Median	Class-divided Societies	
	Hugh		Capitalist Societies
	Very High	Socialist Societies	

The central qualitative break in Giddens's typology occurs between capitalism and all noncapitalist societies. Only in capitalism are allocative resources the central basis of power, and thus only in capitalism can class be viewed as the organizing principle of the society. Only in capitalism is it the case that the direct control over allocative resources (private ownership of the means of production) in and of itself confers general social power. In feudalism, and indeed in all 'class-divided societies', the control over authoritative resources was the central issue. While peasants often controlled the means of production, this did not confer general

¹³ In addition to the distinction between the type of resource which is most important and the algor of space-time distinction with respect to resources, Giddens makes a number of other typological distinctions in his discussion of social forms. In particular, he distinguishes societies in terms of the degree and forms of asymmetries in the control over allocative and authoritative resources. This provides the basis for Giddens's analyses of despotism, totalitarianism and democracy. Since these distinctions are clearly embedded in the more basic dimensions indicated above, and since they are given less sustained treatment in the book, I will not consider them systematically in the discussion which follows.

power to the peasant class, because it did not have access to the central authoritative resources of the society. This seems to run directly counter to the Marxist thesis that class structures (or modes of production) are the basic structural principle of all societies. On closer inspection, however, I think that the difference may not be quite so significant for two reasons.

First of all, we can ask: wby is it that in noncapitalist societies authoritative resources are the basis of power, whereas in capitalism allocative resources are the basis? One response of course, is to say that this question is illegitimate. The authoritative/allocative resource distinction could be treated strictly as the taxonomic criterion for specifying the different types of society, and thus there would be no theoretically meaningful answer to the question (any more than there is a theoretically meaningful answer to the question: Why do mammals nurse their young while birds do not?', since in the absence of nursing a mammal wouldn't be a mammal). Giddens, however, does not seem to reject this question, and when he does attempt to explain the differences between the two types of society, he tends to emphasize the causal importance of differences in their economic structures: the importance of agrarian production, the degree of economic autonomy of communities, the existence of free wage labour, the alienability of different forms of property, and so on. 14 While Giddens emphasizes noneconomic factors in his explanations of the gensis of capitalism (e.g. the specific character of the European state system), he consistently argues that it is the distinctive property relations of capitalism that explain why class becomes such a central organizing principle of capitalist societies. Such an explanation, however, is symmetrical: the distinctive property relations of feudal society (in contrast to capitalism) explain why in feudalism the control of authoritative resources is the central axis of power.

This argument comes quite close to Marx's argument in Capital that the economic structure of society is 'determinant' even if in specific types of society other aspects of society may be 'primary': 'One thing is clear: the Middle Ages could not live on Catholicism, nor could the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, it is the manner in which they gained their livelihood which explains why in one case politics, in the other Catholicism, played the chief part.' This idea is also at the heart of Althusser's notion of society as a 'structured totality' within which the form of economic structure determines which aspect (instance or level) of the society is 'dominant'. To be sure, Giddens emphatically, and I think correctly, rejects the functionalist logic underlying Althusser's argument. But nevertheless it appears that when Giddens tries to explain the differences in the relationship between allocative and authoritative resources in capitalist and noncapitalist societies he relies heavily on differences in the system of property relations.

Giddens's Definition of 'Class'

A second reason why Giddens's position may not be quite so distant from some Marxist formulations centers on the concept of class itself. Giddens

¹⁴ See, for example, oc, pp 114-15

¹⁵ Volume I, Harmondsworth 1976, p 176

very narrowly ties the concept of class to 'sectional forms of domination created by private ownership of property,'16 where 'ownership' is taken to mean the direct control over the use and disposition of property, and 'private' is meant to designate legally guaranteed individual (or family) rights of disposition over that property. This means that where an individual or group appropriates surplus through directly coercive means without controlling the actual use of the means of production, this appropriation is treated as a result of the control over authoritative resources (command over military personnel and activity), not ownership of private property. The result of such coercive appropriation is still class division since it produces differential access to allocative resources (i.e. rich and poor), but the basis for the appropriation itself is not the class structure, but the structure of authoritative domination. It is for this reason that Giddens insists such societies should be termed class-divided rather than class societies.

This formulation by Giddens depends heavily upon his definition of 'class'. Many Marxists, myself included, define classes in terms of the mechanisms by which surplus products or surplus labour is appropriated, not by private property in the means of production as such. ¹⁷ Such appropriation of surplus always involves specific combinations of economic and political mechanisms (i.e. relations to allocative and authoritative resources in the present context). In feudal societies this mechanism involves the direct use of extra-economic coercion; in capitalist societies the political face of class relations is restricted to the guarantee of contracts and the supervision of the labour process. In both societies, however, the mechanisms of surplus extraction specify the character of class relations.

What this suggests is that the disagreement between Giddens and many Marxists is at least partially of a terminological nature. Marxists draw precisely the same descriptive contrast as Giddens does between the economic mechanisms of class relations rooted in the labor contract of capitalist society and the extraeconomic coercive mechanisms of noncapitalist class societies. And many Marxists agree completely with Giddens that this qualitative distinction between capitalist and precapitalist (or noncapitalist) societies is a much more fundamental break than any distinctions among the range of precapitalist societies (G. A. Cohen in particular stresses this point). Where they differ is in how the term 'class' is to be employed with respect to the use of authoritative and allocative resources in surplus appropriation.

Now, terminological disputes are rarely innocent. It is generally the case that drawing the boundary criteria for a concept in one way or another opens up or closes off lines of theoretical inquiry. When Marxists treat the mechanism of appropriation (exploitation of labour) as the pivot for specifying class relations they are doing so because, at least implicitly, they feel that: (1) these mechanisms determine a set of social actors or

¹⁶ CC, p. 107

¹⁷ For an important dissenting view which attempts to build a Marxist concept of class strictly in terms of property relations, see John Roemer, A General Theory of Exploitation and Class, (Cambridge [Mass] 1982), and the special issue of Politics and Society (11'5, 1982) devoted to a debate on his work

collectivities with opposing interests and thus tendencies towards struggle; (2) the typological distinctions among these mechanisms constitute the basis for distinguishing societies with different dynamics, forms of social conflict, trajectories of development; and (3) the different elements within these mechanisms do not have an autonomous logic, but instead form at least a loose kind of *gestalt*.

This last point is, I think, the most fundamental in the present context. By combining the control over allocative and authoritative resources in the specification of class relations, Marxists are at least implicitly arguing that these two forms of resource control are not just contingently interconnected. They are systematically linked one to the other so that only certain forms of combination can occur stably. By excluding the relation to authoritative resources from the concept of class, Giddens is, in contrast, affirming his view that the social organization of authoritative resources and their development and transformation is autonomous from allocative resources. (This is not to say, of course, that the development of forms of control of authoritative resources has no effects on allocative resource control, but simply that those effects are contingent rather than necessary.) The implications of this difference in claims about the relationship between allocative and authoritative resources will become clearer when we discuss the problem of evolutionism below. But first we must briefly turn to the issue of intrasocietal class reductionism.

(B) Intrasocietal Class Reductionism

Historical materialism is class reductionist, Giddens argues, not only in its treatment of the central differences between societies; it is reductionist in its treatment of the various forms of domination within given societies. In addition to class relations, Giddens argues that relations between states, between ethnic groups and between sexes constitute 'axes of exploitative relationships'. None of these are reducible to class exploitation. Marxists, however, have often attempted to explain the existence and forms of these axes of domination or exploitation as 'expressions' of class, typically by recourse to functional explanations. If such reductionist accounts are illegitimate, then the attempt at characterizing the overall form of society strictly in terms of modes of production is clearly inadequate, since interstate, ethnic and sexual relations of domination within societies have sources of variation independent of class structures.

Many, perhaps most, contemporary Marxist theorists accept much of this argument. In general there is a recognition that at least ethnic and sexual domination are not simply reflexes of class domination, and some Marxists would add inter-state domination to this as well. How much autonomy such relations have and precisely how their articulation with the class system should be understood are, of course, matters of considerable disagreement. While tendencies towards functional reductionism continue in the Marxist tradition, it is nevertheless the case that

¹⁸ CC, p. 242

the thrust of much contemporary Marxist thinking has been against attempts at intrasocietal class reductionism.

Where Marxists would tend to disagree with Giddens is in the implication that such irreducibility of sex or ethnicity or nationality to class implies that these various forms of domination/exploitation are of potentially equal status in defining the differences between or dynamics within societies. Most Marxists would continue to argue for a general primacy of class, even if other relations are not simple reflections of class. In particular it is often argued that the class structure determines the limits of possible variation of other forms of relations, even if it does not functionally determine the specificity of those relations. If such arguments are correct, class relations do not simply 'illuminate' the analysis of sex, ethnicity or nationality, as Giddens suggests; they determine the basic structural parameters within which these other relations develop.

This kind of argument, of course, can be reversed. It can be argued, as many feminist writers have argued, that gender relations impose limits on forms of variation on the class structure. And it is certainly plausible to argue that the interstate system of political and military relations imposes real limits on the possible forms of development of class relations. If the relations of limitation are symmetrical, then it is rather arbitrary to claim any primacy for class relations. Yet Marxists continue to argue for such primacy, if sometimes covertly or apologetically. Three kinds of arguments are used to defend the primacy of class. First, it is sometimes argued, if only implicitly, that while various nonclass forms of domination are irreducible to class, class most systematically and deeply structures the forms of consciousness of actors. This does not imply that individuals are necessarily 'class conscious' in the sense of being aware of their class position and class interests, but simply that their forms of social consciousness are most systematically shaped by their class location. Class, therefore, is viewed as having the greatest existential impact on human subjectivity, and therefore should be accorded primacy.

Giddens endorses this view for capitalism—and thus his designation of capitalism as a class society, a society within which class permeates all facets of social life—but he rejects it as a general thesis about the effects of class in all societies. In this, I think Giddens is correct. Indeed, I would argue that even for capitalism there is no necessity for class to be existentially primary in all cases. It is entirely possible, for example, for racial domination more pervasively to shape the forms of consciousness of an oppressed racial group than class domination. And at least in some advanced capitalist societies, the same might be said for gender domination. In any event, the thesis is at most valid for capitalism, and thus cannot effectively serve as a defence for the primacy Marxists accord to class in general.

A second argument for class primacy, therefore, shifts the attention from the consciousness of actors to the objective constraints under which they act. Here the argument is that class relations, by structuring the access to social resources of various sorts (particularly the surplus product), most pervasively determine the limits on capacities for action of different groups, including groups defined by nonclass relations. Thus, for

example, racial domination may be irreducible to class domination, and yet the condition for blacks to struggle effectively against racial subordination may be gaining control over more of the surplus product. Thus, even if the interests or motivations for struggle are irreducible to class interests, the conditions for successful pursuit of those nonclass interests are fundamentally structured by class relations.¹⁹

This argument seems much sounder than the first. Nevertheless, it could still be argued that there are many necessary conditions for successful struggle, including ideological and political factors which are themselves not simply reflections of relations of control over the surplus product (i.e. class structures), and there is no compelling reason to privilege any of these multiple necessary conditions. While it may be the case that transformation of the class structure is part of the process of black liberation, it is also the case that transforming racial consciousness is a necessary condition for transforming the class structure. It is therefore arbitrary to assign one of these 'necessary conditions' a privileged position, and thus to accord class a general primacy over other relations.

This, then, leads to the third argument in defence of the primacy of class. While it may be the case that different forms of domination reciprocally condition each other as suggested above, Marxists have generally argued that only class relations have an internal logic of development, a logic which generates systematic tendencies for a trajectory of transformations of the class structure. This trajectory has a general directionality, it is argued, because of the way class relations and class struggles are articulated to the development of the forces of production. The apparent symmetry in the relationship between class and gender or class and race, therefore, is disrupted by the developmental tendencies of class relations. No such developmental trajectory has been persuasively argued for other forms of domination. This third argument seems to me to be the most compelling. To assess it we must turn to the third critique Giddens raises against historical materialism: evolutionism.

III. Evolutionism

Throughout A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism Giddens attacks all forms of evolutionary thinking in social theory. He does so for two principal reasons, one methodological and the other primarily empirical. Methodologically, most evolutionary perspectives in sociology are based on some notion of adaptation, particularly of adaptation of society to its material environment. But, Giddens insists, it is meaningless to talk about 'societies' adapting to anything: 'the idea of adaptation falls in the same category as the functional "needs" to which I have already objected. Societies have no need to "adapt" to (master, conquer) their

¹⁹ This argument rests on the distinction between the 'interests' groups may have and their 'capacities' for realizing those interests (see Wright, Class, Crais and the State, NLB, London 1978, pp. 98–108). Functionalist attempts at reducing nonclass relations to class relations typically involve a translation of nonclass interests into class interests. The 'interest' whites might have in dominating blacks is explained in terms of the 'interests' the bourgeoisie has for dominating workers: the former is functional for the latter. Here, nonclass interests are viewed as radically irreducible to class interests, but the capacities for realizing those interests are dependent upon class relations.

material environments.'20 Societies are not organisms and it is an inadmissible use of language to see them as evolving adaptively in the manner of biological organisms. The tacit teleology of such arguments must be rejected.

An alternative is to reconstruct the theory of social evolution on the basis of a theory of individual human adaptation. Human individuals, it could be argued, adapt to their environment and through such adaptation the societies within which they live may be pushed along some evolutionary path, even though the mechanism is not really lodged in 'society' per se. Such a reconstruction, Giddens argues, simply fails empirically. While it no longer rests on the methodological sin of reifying society, it is now based on a false empirical generalization, namely that there is a transhistorical tendency for human beings to improve their material conditions of existence. Furthermore, no alternative transhistorical principle of adaptation can be found: in Giddens's view there simply are no transhistorical individual drives or motives which could provide the basis for a general theory of social development.

The Marxist theory of history is thus doubly unsatisfactory. It is, in Giddens's view, empirically false. It is simply not true that there is any general tendency for the forces of production to develop throughout history, and thus the 'dialectic' of forces and relations of production could not possibly be the basis for a general trajectory of historical development. And it is methodologically flawed in its presupposition that societies have transhistorical adaptive imperatives.

In place of such evolutionary schemas, Giddens offers a view of social change in terms of what he calls spisodic characterizations and time-space edges. 'Episodes,' Giddens writes, 'refer to processes of social change that have definite direction and form, and in which definite structural transformations occur'. The critical point is that the directionality and dynamics of such change are specific to each episode, each historically specific form of social transition. There is no general dynamic or direction to social change. There are no 'episodes of episodes'. 'Time-space edges' refer to the 'simultaneous existence of types of society in episodic transitions'. Ciddens feels that evolutionary theories imply successions of societies in sequences of stages, whereas in fact social changes is always a process of overlapping of different forms of society. Instead of a theory of social evolution, Giddens thus envisions social change as a set of qualitatively distinct transitions involving overlapping forms of society and which have no overall pattern or logic of development.

I will criticize Giddens's treatment of evolutionism on several grounds: first, while he is correct in rejecting teleological forms of evolutionary theory, he is wrong to characterize evolutionary theory as necessarily teleological; second, when a proper specification of evolutionary theory is made, it does not have the flaws attributed to it by Giddens; and third, Giddens's own theory of space-time distanciation and episodic transitions should be viewed as a variety of evolutionary theory in these terms.

²⁰ CC, p 21.

²¹ Ibal, p 23. 22 Ibal

My conclusion will therefore be that the challenge Giddens poses to Marxist theory is not so much anti-evolutionism vs. evolutionism, but two substantively different theories of social evolution.

Giddens is on firm ground when he rejects theories of social evolution which are built on teleological arguments, arguments that societies inexorably develop towards some end-state of increasing adaptation to environmental or material conditions. And he is correct that one finds such images of social development in many social theories employing evolutionary arguments, Marxism included. In contrast to Giddens's claims, however, I would argue that this is not the essential structure of evolutionary theory. For a theory of society to be evolutionary three conditions must hold:

- (1) The theory involves a typology of social forms which potentially has some kind of directionality to it. Evolutionary theories are not built simply around taxonomies of societies, but typologies capable of being ordered in a nonarbitrary way.
- (2) It is possible to order these forms of society in such a way that the probability of staying at the same level of the typology is greater than the probability of regressing.
- (3) In this ordered typology, there is a positive probability of moving from a given level of the typology to the next higher level. This need not be greater than the probability of regressing, but once a movement up occurs, the probability of staying there is greater than the probability of moving back. However weak the tendency towards development is, the typology is thus 'sticky downward'. This implies that there is some process, however weak and sporadic, which imparts a directionality to movements from one form to another.

Several things are important to note about this way of defining evolutionary theory. First, there is no claim that societies have needs or teleologically driven tendencies towards achieving some final state. Teleological arguments would be one way of elaborating conditions 2 and 3, but not the only way. Second, this way of defining evolutionary theory does not imply that there is a rigid sequence of stages through which all societies wast move. There is no statement that the probability of skipping a stage is zero. The only claim is that there is some positive impulse for movement. Third, it does not follow from this specification that all, or even most, societies necessarily evolve. Regressions are possible, perhaps in some situations even more likely than progressions. And in most societies, long-term steady states may be more likely than any systematic tendency for movement in the typology. All that is implied in the criteria for evolutionary theory is that given enough time, was societies will evolve in the manner indicated in the evolutionary typology.

Finally, this definition of evolutionary theory does not imply a metatheory of history, in the sense of claims for a universal mechanism of transition from one form of society to another. There is, to be sure, a claim about a universal logic to the typology of social forms in the

evolutionary process, but the actual mechanisms which might explain movement between adjacent forms on the typology need not be the same at every stage of the typology. The theory specifies the roadmap of history and specifies which kinds of movements are likely to be stable or unstable, reproducible or unreproducible. But it does not necessarily postulate a universal process for each actual transition.²³ Obviously, this specification of evolutionary theory is clearly nontrivial. There is no logical reason why every taxonomy of societies should meet these criteria and it may be impossible to order social forms in this way.

The Development of the Forces of Production

The Marxist theory of social change meets these three criteria. While it is certainly true that before capitalism there were no strong impulses for the development of the forces of production, nevertheless it was the case that (a) there was in general a positive probability of the forces of production developing, if only very sporadically and slowly, and (b) the probability of regression was less than the probability of retaining given levels of productivity.

The defense of such claims need not rely at all on theses about the goals or needs of society. What is needed is a general argument for why the development of the forces of production should be 'sticky downward'. A number of such arguments can be found in Marxist writing: First, and perhaps least contentiously, there are in general no groups in a society with interests directly in reducing the level of productivity of labour. People may have interests which have the unintended consequence of reducing the productivity of labour (eg. they may have interests which lead them to engage in military activity which results in a destruction of forces of production) or, in specific circumstances, they may intentionally strive to reduce productivity to accomplish some other interest (eg. workers may want to reduce productivity if they feel this will protect their jobs). But no one has an interest in reducing labour productivity per se. This means that once a level of productivity is reached there will not in general be groups organized to reduce it.

Second, the key aspect of the development of the forces of production is the development of knowledge of productive techniques, not the physical hardware as such. As G. A. Cohen has argued, with any luck if a society can retain the knowledge of production it can restore a given level of productivity even if the physical means of production are destroyed, whereas if the knowledge is lost, then those physical means of production are uscless even if they are in working order. Knowledge, in general, has a 'sticky downward' character. This does not mean that technical knowledge is never lost, but simply that it will have tendencies towards being retuned.24

²³ In a somewhat different way, the same point can be made concerning biological evolution. For example, there is no implication in evolutionary theory that climatic change universally explains why evolutionary development accelerates to the point of constituting general transitions between evolutionary epoques, even though this might be the basic explanation for certain specific transitions.

24 G. A. Cohen, Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence, Oxford 1978, p. 41.

Third, as Marx and Engels argued in *The German Ideology*, once a given level of the forces of production is reached by whatever route, it tends to engender needs in people which are dependent upon that level of development of the forces of production. This means that in addition to there being no groups (in general) with strong interests in the reduction of labour productivity, there will be groups with strong interests in the preservation of a given level.

Fourth, specific arguments can be made for why there are also interests in enhancing labour productivity, and thus developing the forces of production (and not simply preventing their decline). Under conditions in which increases in labour productivity have the consequence of reducing the toil of direct producers, direct producers will in general have interests in developing the forces of production. Direct producers may not have any particular interest in increasing the surplus product as such, but they will have interests in reducing unpleasant labour. This means that in preclass societies, in which improvements in productivity generally imply lesser toil, direct producers will have interests in increasing productivity. This does not mean that people will feel under any great pressure to reduce toil, but simply that when innovations which reduce toil occur for whatever reasons and however sporadically, they will tend to be adopted rather than rejected. 25

In societies with class exploitation, however, there is no longer any necessary link between the development of the forces of production and the reduction of toil. On the contrary, in many cases technical changes may be associated with the intensification of toil of direct producers. There will thus no longer be any universal interests in developing the forces of production. Ruling classes, however, will generally have at least weak interests in adopting changes which increase the level of labour productivity. They certainly have class interests in maintaining or enhancing the level of surplus appropriation, since this is critical to their reproduction as a ruling class. And except in peculiar circumstances where increasing productivity undermines their ability to appropriate surplus, this implies that they will have some interest in the development of the forces of production. This certainly does not mean that in precapitalist class societies, ruling classes experience systematic pressures to encourage such innovations, but simply that they will tend to adopt them when they occur.

To be sure, this is a very weak impulse throughout much of human history. It took hundreds of thousands of years of virtually stagnant forces of production before some of the basic innovations which marked the transition from hunting and gathering societies to settled agriculture occurred. And many societies continued without such innovations at all. The argument is simply that there is at least a weak impulse for such improvement and that when such achievements are made, they are not willingly relinquished.

The Marxist theory of history, of course, is not simply a technological

²⁵ Cohen's arguments for the tendency for development of the forces of production revolves around the problem of toil (See *that*, esp. pp. 302–07)

typology of societies. The heart of the theory is a specific argument about the interconnection between the tendency for the forces of production to develop and the social relations of production within which those forces of production are used. Two pivotal claims are made: (1) That for a given level of the forces of production, only certain types of production relations are possible. Other forms, if they were to occur through historical accidents, would be highly unstable and would be more or less rapidly transformed into a 'compatible' form. (2) Within a given form of production relations, there is a limit to the possible development of the forces of production. There is thus a relationship of reciprocal limitation between the forces and relations of production. However, as argued above, there is at least a weak impulse for the forces of production to develop, and this creates a dynamic asymmetry in their interconnection. Eventually the forces of production will reach a point at which they are 'fettered', that is, a point at which further development is impossible in the absence of transformations of the relations of production.

Distanciation and Power

Now, the classic Marxist argument is that when such fettering occurs, the relations will be transformed, and thus societies will necessarily move from one societal form to another. As I have argued elsewhere this claim presupposes that social actors with interests in such transformations will necessarily have the capacity to accomplish the qualitative change in social relations of production. And thus the strong claims about the inevitability of progression cannot be sustained. This, however, does not call into question the argument about the tendencies towards progression or the directionality of the ordering of social forms. And this is all that is needed for the theory to retain its evolutionary structure.

Not only does Marxist theory generally meet these three criteria for evolutionary theory, so does the framework elaborated by Giddens in A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism and elsewhere. Giddens formulates a typology of social forms which has a clear quantitative ordering along the dimension of space-time distanciation. But does this ordering meet the second and third criteria of evolutionary theories? Giddens insists that the mechanisms or dynamics of movement from one form to another are specific to each transition; there is no transhistorical impulse to move from tribal societies with low space-time distanciation to capitalist societies and eventually socialist societies with high space-time distanciation.

On closer inspection, however, Giddens's own detailed accounts seem to suggest a general logic to such progression. 'Space-time distanciation' is a concept which captures the ability of people in a society to control allocative and authoritative resources in time and space for use in power relations. Expanding allocative space-time distanciation involves (among other things) the development of the forces of production; expanding authoritative space-time distanciation involves developing the means of surveillance. Increases in such distanciation are human achievements:

²⁶ See Levine and Wright (1980)

they increase the capacities of certain agents to act. But if those are indeed capacities, then it follows that the people whose capacities are enhanced by a given level of distanciation will not willingly accept lower levels of space-time distanciation once a given level is achieved.

Of course, there may be other agents who would like to see the level of distanciation reduced. This is particularly the case for space-time distanciation of authoritative resources. Is there any general reason why we might suppose that the capacities of actors with anti-distanciation interests will generally be weaker than those with pro-distanciation interests? The answer to this question depends upon how we conceive the relationship between the *level of* space-time distanciation and the degree of *inequality of access to* the resources in question. There are two principal possibilities:

- (1) If there is complete equality in access—radically egalitarian distributions of access to allocative and authoritative resources—then all agents would have an interest in preventing reductions of distanciation, since this would reduce their capacities to act. They might not have interests in actually increasing distanciation, since increases might have negative consequences for the initial egalitarian distributions, but they would in general have strong interests in opposing reductions.
- (2) If, on the other hand, there is unequal distribution of access, then in general those with the greatest access to the resources in question will have an interest in preventing a decline in space-time distanciation with respect to those resources. And, since by virtue of their greater access to the resources they also have greater capacities to secure their interests, they will, in general be able to prevent such regression from occurring. The only exception to this would be the peculiar circumstance in which people with the greatest access to authoritative and/or allocative resources would have their control of resources increased by a decline of distanciation. This could occur if regression increased inequality more than it reduced overall space-time distanciation. In general, however, agents with privileged access to resources will have both an interest in preserving a given level of distanciation and the capacity to secure that interest. This does not mean that distanciation will never regress, but simply that it will tend to be sticky downward in both the egalitarian and inegalitarian situations. 27

What can we say about the third criterion? Is there a positive probability however weak of forward movement? Clearly there is in capitalist society,

²⁷ The argument actually needs to be made more complex since the increase in space-time distanciation with respect to authoritative and allocative resources is not in general a unitary process in Giddens's analysis. In contemporary capitalism, for example, it could be argued that capitalists have interests in a reduction in space-time distanciation with respect to authoritative resources—i.e. reducing the planning capacities of the state—precisely because their control over allocative resources tends to be eroded by the expansion of state-centered control over authoritative resources. Capitalists, therefore, use their power, rooted in the inequalities of access to allocative resources, to prevent declines in allocative space-time distanciation by trying to reduce authoritative space-time distanciation. There is still a sticky downward property to distanciation, but it has a more uneven character to it than suggested above.

but is there any such general impulse towards increasing space-time distanciation (not just preventing its decline)? I think that it is possible to read such an impulse from Giddens's analysis. Essentially, the impulse towards expansion of space-time distanciation comes from different forms of conflict and competition in different societies. In class societies (capitalism) this is impelled primarily by conflicts over allocative resources in the form of economic competition between capitalist firms; in class-divided societies it is rooted in conflicts over authoritative resources, primarily in the form of military and territorial competition. The leading edge of space-time distanciation thus varies, depending upon which kind of resource is the 'basis of power' in the society, and accordingly which dimension of distanciation will be most implicated in social conflicts. 28 Because of the link between conflict, power, resources and distanciation, there will be at least some impulse for increasing space-time distanciation throughout history. Again, this is not equivalent to claiming that there will be universal progress, a universal tendency for all societies to actually increase space-time distanciation; it is simply a claim that there is a universal, if often weak, impulse towards such increase, and thus a positive probability for such increases to occur.

Giddens's Causal Pluralism

If this reconstruction of Giddens's argument is correct, then what is novel in Giddens's argument is not that it is necessarily anti-evolutionary (although it is anti-teleological), but that it proposes a dual logic to evolutionary development: the evolutionary trajectory is animated by the autonomous impulses for the expansion of space-time distanciation with respect to allocative and authoritative resources. Stated in more conventional terms (which Giddens would probably disavow), social evolution is the result of autonomous evolutionary dynamics rooted simultaneously in political and economic structures. While in specific historical cases one may be justified in saying that one or the other of these constitutes the central locus of impulses for social change, there is no general priority of one over the other and their interconnection is best characterized as historically specific and contingent.

What we have, then, are two contending evolutionary theories. ²⁹ The debate over these alternatives is not, I would argue, fundamentally a methodological one, but a substantive one. On the one hand there is the view, shared by most Marxists, that the developmental tendencies with

²⁸ Giddens insists in A Contemporary Critique (p. 50) and in Central Problems in Social Theory (p. 54) that the concepts of domination and power do not necessarily imply conflict, although they may be universally implicated in conflicts. Giddens, in effect, wants to leave the door open for the possibility that there is no opposition of interests between dominators and dominated within power relations: in a Rawlsian sense, inequalities in access to allocative and authoritative resources could conceivably be in the interests of those agents with the least access to those resources. Nevertheless, in more historical terms, inequality of access to resources does generate opposing interests and thus conflicts, and such conflicts can be viewed as providing impulses towards increasing distanciation

²⁹ To these a third evolutionary principle could be added, as elaborated in the recent work of Jurgen Habermas (Communication and the Evolution of Society, Boston 1979): the claim that normative structures also have an anutonomous logic of development producing a typology of societies based on their level of moral development (a kind of moral space-time distanciation, where 'meaning' can be seen as an action-relevant resource).

respect to political power and economic structures are intrinsically linked, with economic structures having primacy. While there may be a 'relative autonomy' of one with respect to the other in the sense that a range of variations in forms of political power can coexist with a given form of economic structure, the relation is not simply a historically contingent one. They form a loose gestalt. And within this gestalt, the most systematically dynamic element is rooted in the organization of production itself. Giddens, on the other hand, insists that the developmental tendencies of these two structures are autonomous and no general principles govern their interconnection. In different historically specific situations one or the other may be most important.

This debate underlays the specification of the concept of class as well as the claims about the relationship between class domination and other forms of domination discussed earlier. The Marxist claim that the concept of class combines the relations of economic exploitation and authoritative domination is implicitly a rejection of the claim that these have genuinely autonomous logics of development; Giddens's restriction of class to relations of domination with respect to allocative resources affirms his view that allocative and authoritative domination are autonomous processes. The adjudication of these contending class concepts and the typologies of social forms to which they are linked, therefore, ultimately hinges on these different substantive claims about the process of transformation of economic and political (allocative and authoritative) aspects of social relations.

It is not, of course, an easy task to build a convincing case one way or the other on this issue. Particularly once the simple functionalist version of the base-superstructure model is abandoned, it is difficult to argue systematically for the structural unity of economic and political relations within the theory of social development and the concept of class. It is tempting, therefore, to opt for Giddens's solution, to reduce the theoretical ambitions of Marxism in favour of a more contingent causal pluralism. This solution has been pursued in different ways by a number of Marxist theorists such as Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst in England and Robin Hahnel and Michael Albert in the United States.³⁰

This temptation, I think, should be resisted. Even though it is in need of modification in a number of crucial ways, there are, I believe, compelling intuitions for why the Marxian account of evolutionary trajectories should be retained. I will mention only a few of these in closing:

(1) As discussed earlier, Marxists generally share Giddens's view that in precapitalist societies the appropriation of surplus labor (or products) relied on the use of extra-economic coercion (control over authoritative resources). There is therefore no disagreement that the concrete relationship between control over allocative and authoritative resources varies across social forms. Marxists, however, insist that the explanation for the primacy of authoritative resources in precapitalist societies must

³⁰ See in particular Anthony Cutler, Barry Hindess, Paul Q. Hirst and Athar Hussain, Merx's Capital and Capitalism Today, 2 volumes, London 1979 and 1980; and Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, Unorthodax Marxism, Boston 1979.

be sought in the nature of the economic structure of such societies. If this is correct—and nothing in Giddens's analysis directly challenges this point—then it should be expected that the key to understanding changes in the relationship between allocative and authoritative resources lies in understanding the trajectory of development of economic structures. This does not imply that an autonomous political process of change is absent, but simply that the dynamics centered in property relations impose more fundamental limits on the overall process of social change.

- (2) Any theory of social change that recognizes the importance of social actors must contain, among other things, an account of the interests implicated in different processes of social change and the capacities of actors for translating such interests into outcomes. In these terms, there is a clearer link between interests and the evolutionary tendencies around allocative resources than around authoritative resources. Throughout most of human history there have been systematic interests in increasing the productivity of labour either in order to reduce toil or to increase actual surplus products, and this underwrites the sustained, if often weak, impulse towards the improvement of the forces of production. There is no such general interest in the expansion of social control over authoritative resources. Such expansion is pervasively contested, and thus there is a less sustained generic impulse for its continual development. To the extent that in spite of this contestation there is a net evolutionary tendency for 'space-time distanciation' with respect to authoritative resources, it is because the social actors supporting such expansion have greater capacities (power) to accomplish their objectives. But this greater capacity itself depends upon their control over allocative resources: the means of paying troops and retainers, of building the infrastructures of surveillance and communication, etc. Thus again, there is an asymmetry between allocative and authoritative resources, with the former providing a more systematic basis for explanations of evolutionary tendencies.
- (3) Finally, the motivational assumptions underlying claims about the development of the forces of production are more plausible than parallel claims about the autonomous development of control over authoritative resources. It is easy to see why people wish to reduce toil or increase surplus—or at least, why they are reluctant to have labour productivity decline (i.e. why the changes are sticky downward). But why should people want greater 'space-time distanciation' over authoritative resources? One answer is that this contributes to their material wellbeing, either by increasing consumption or reducing toil even further. The beneficiaries of increasing space-time distanciation of authoritative resources are typically ruling classes who use their increased command of authoritative resources to increase their material welfare. 31 Such an answer, however, has the effect of subordinating the development of authoritative resources to motivations structured by allocative resources. This kind of subordination is more consistent with the Marxist account of their intrinsic structural interconnection. An alternative answer is that

³¹ It is interesting in this regard that many of the earliest historical advances in surveillance which Giddens stresses so heavily were advances precisely concerned with the tallying of tribute. See, for example, his discussion of the early forms of writing in Sumer (CC, p. 95). The content of these lists are all centered on allocative resources.

people want power for power's sake, not because it increases their material welfare. This could then provide the motivational basis for an autonomous development of political power, of domination with respect to authoritative resources. However, while there are undoubtedly specific cases of such noninstrumental power motivations (i.e. power as an end in itself rather than as a means to some other end), this seems hardly a satisfactory motivational basis for a general argument of the autonomous logic of development of authoritative resources.

Conclusion

It is important not to overstate the differences between much of what Giddens proposes and the basic tendencies of current Marxist theorizing. While Giddens's general theory of action may run counter to mechanistic and functionalist reasoning in the Marxist tradition, it is largely compatible with most of the substantive claims of both classical and contemporary Marxism. There is no intrinsic incompatability between the substantive claims Marxists make about the importance of class structures and class struggle, about the role of the state and ideology, etc. and Giddens's methodological stress on the knowledgeability of actors, the 'duality of structure', the analysis of social processes in terms of the unacknowledged conditions of action and the unintended consequences of action, and so on. Many of the criticisms of functionalism and class reductionism which Giddens makes from this methodological standpoint are also accepted by many, if by no means all, contemporary Marxist theorists.

Even on more strictly substantive matters, Giddens's position is not generally the polar opposite of Marxist positions. The actual structural typology of societies Giddens elaborates is much closer to conventional Marxist typologies than either are to typologies in 'modernization' theory, for example. And on many specific topics, such as the analysis of the capitalist labour process, the developmental dynamics of capitalism or the structural contrast in forms of surplus extraction in capitalism and feudalism, Giddens's analysis hardly differs at all from most current Marxist formulations.

What is less easily meshed with contemporary Marxism are Giddens's arguments of the duality of power rooted in the autonomous logic of control over allocative and authoritative resources. This leads Giddens to reject the possibility of any general theory of history, any general principles of historical development, in favour of more limited epochal theories of particular transitions. Most Marxists retain a commitment to constructing an overall theory of historical development, based in some version of historical materialism, within which the development and contradictions of class relations provide the central framework for analysis. Giddens not only rejects the substantive propositions of this project, he rejects the project itself.

What are the stakes in Giddens's critique of the possibility of a theory of history? Some Marxists have argued that the Marxist theory of history can in any event be abandoned without prejudicing Marxist class analysis. In this view Marxism provides a range of general concepts with which to

analyse historical development, but provides no general theory of that development. There are specific theories of specific social formations, but no general theory of the overall historical trajectory of social forms. Can the Marxist theory of history be dispensed with so easily without serious ramifications for Marxism in general?

I think not. Specifically, I think that the justification for Marxian class analysis largely rests on the theory of history in which it is embedded. There are three kinds of arguments for the Marxist preoccupation with class: a functional defence, a structural constraint defence, and what I have termed a dynamic defence. Each of these potentially provides a defence of Marxist claims for the primacy of class in the analysis of social structure and social change. If the functional defence is rejected as unsatisfactory, and the structural defence is viewed as only contingently correct, then we are left with the dynamic argument class relations have a specific primacy in that dynamics rooted in class relations provide an overall directionality to the trajectory of historical change. If this argument is also rejected, then there is no longer any general justification for Marxist class analysis as such. Without the theory of history and without a general theory of class analysis, it is hard to see what remains as the distinctive theoretical core of Marxism as such. ³²

It would still be possible, of course, to adopt insights from Marxist class analysis, as Giddens enthusiastically does. And it would even be possible to say that in a particular instance, say the analysis of capitalism, class does have a form of primacy as characterized by Marxist theory. But there would no longer be any grounds for class analysis being the core of a general social theory. This is the central challenge posed by Giddens's critique. It is a challenge which should be taken seriously by Marxists.

³² Two other ways of defining the distinctiveness of Marxism could be adopted, but neither seems satisfactory. One is to say that Marxism has no distinctive substantive theory at all; its distinctiveness is entirely one of 'method'. This is the stance adopted by Lukacs in his famous essay, 'What is Orthodox Marxism?' (in *History and Class Concentuats*, Cambridge [Mass] 1971). The other is to say that the distinctiveness of Marxism lies in its political project—socialist revolution, the emancipation of the proletariat, the liberation of humanity (or some related formulation)—rather than in either its specific methodological prescriptions or its substantive propositions. The first of these seems unsatisfactory because when 'Marxist method' is properly specified and its tendencies towards Hegelsanism eliminated, then in general its prescriptions are no longer unique to Marxism. And the second is unsatisfactory, for without a substantive theory, there is no reason to believe that this political project is possible, or, perhaps more significantly, that socialism—a particular form of transformation of class relations—is the necessary condition for human emancipation in general. While the political project of Marxism is crucial, it cannot be viewed as an autonomous justification of Marxism outside of the substantive theory to which it is linked.

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Why Some Classes Are More Successful than Others

A theoretical model of class formation must undergird any serious theory of capitalist politics, just as the concrete analysis of class formation must be the prerequisite for the realistic examination of the historical development of any particular capitalist country. So far, in contemporary Marxist research, two approaches to the problem of class formation have predominated. On one hand, there is the current of social and labour history whose unrivalled exemplar remains Edward Thompson's The Making of the English Working Class. Primarily concerned with the nineteenth century, the main contribution of this historiographic work has been to tell us when and how, and sometimes to what extent, a distinctive, self-conscious working class first came into existence, set apart from the rest of the population. On the other hand, there is another body of research and debate which commences from the reformist versus revolutionary dichotomy, and has the aim of explaining why, when and to what extent this or that working class became reformist—as the supposedly unexpected norm—deviating from the vision of revolutionary socialism. The

literature on this topic is almost inexhaustable, but its fulcrum may be said to be the debate—for and against—the labour aristocracy thesis. Here, however, I am mainly interested in class formation as a twentieth-century explaners, not as a nineteenth-century explanation. Likewise, I am not so much concerned with the characteristics of a given class per se, as with its capacities and achievements in conflict and in other types of relations with other classes. From this relational perspective, the question of whether and why a certain class at a certain time should be called reformist or revolutionary loses its centrality, and is replaced by a question of the capacities of a given class to act in relation to others and the forms of organization and practice thereby developed.

Behind this reformulation of the classical question is obviously the hindsight that all working classes under advanced capitalism have become predominantly reformist, thus making variations amongst 'reformist' classes more interesting, and politically salient, than the abstract reformist-revolutionary distinction per se. But other considerations are also involved. First, revolutions so I will argue do not spring so much from revolutionary class consciousness, cultivated in situ, as from revolutionary situations of institutional breakdown in which masses become revolutionized. Therefore the degree of revolutionary ideology in a non-revolutionary situation has little definitive explanatory power. Secondly, from the standpoint of a materialist concept of history, what is being done and what is being achieved are more important than what ideas are being held. Forms of practice are, typically, more interesting than states of consciousness. Thirdly, reformist and revolutionary practices and postures are important to an analysis of societal development, not in themselves, but in their effects upon social relations of power. Which type of practice is more capable of advancing the positions of a given class in a certain society in a certain period cannot be determined a priori. For all these reasons, the reformism-revolutionism

² The most remarkable recent work in the Lemmas labour aristocracy tradition is, of course, John Foster, Class Straggle and the Industrial Revolution, London 1974; while the sharpest recent entique is probably HF. Moorhouse, The Marxian Theory of the Labour Amstocracy', Social History 3 (January 1978) and 'The Significance of the Labour Aristocracy', ibid, 5 (May 1981). The best overview of the whole discussion is in G

Olofsson, Mellen klass ech stat, Lund 1978 (English translation forthcoming).

¹ This article attempts to integrate provisional findings and hypotheses from two, interrelated endeavours of the author. One is the development of a theory of capitalist politics, the other is the analysis of the formation and trajectory of a particular capitalist country, Sweden Moreover, in its dual character, this article draws upon two earlier papers. At the International Political Science Association Congress in Moscow in 1979 I presented a paper, 'Enterprises, Markets and States', dealing with the structural determinants of capital-labour relations. It had a spatial focus, centering on the relations between three major arenas of class conflict and on the relative range of the controlling capacities of capital and labour (The present paper, in contrast, has a more historical orientation and concentrates largely upon how historical they and the interrelationship of different temporalities affect the spatial relations of power.) The other paper, 'Sweden Before and After Social Democracy', was included in the special issue of Acta Sacrologica prepared for the 1978 Congress of the International Sociological Association, and summarizes research by myself and my collaborators engaged in the project on 'Sweden Under Social Democracy'. In this paper we argued that the development of the Swedish welfare state under Social Democratic governments from 1932 to 1976 could not be explained by a parliamentary butters wiscomutalle, but, rather, required the analysis of class relations whose formation predate the entry of Social Democracy into government.

dichotomy can be more fruitfully subsumed under the problematic of 'class capacity'.

I. How and When Are Classes 'Formed'?

By 'class' we mean, with the mainstream Marxist tradition, a concept designating an aggregate of people having a common location in the relations of production. The rationale for paying attention to class and class formation is our assumption that such a common economic location ensures an inherent tendency to common collective action. In general, class is simultaneously an objective and subjective phenomenon, both something independent of members' consciousness and something expressed in conscious thought and practice. From this it follows that 'class formation' must be conceived as a double process. In its objective aspects, class formation is a socio-economic process accompanying the development of a mode of production: the process of agents moving into, being shaped by, and being distributed between the different kinds of economic practices which constitute the given mode of production. In the case of the working class, this process first of all entails the formation of a mass labour-force for industry and other capitalist enterprises. In its subjective aspect, on the other hand, class formation is an ideological and political process of the tendential unification of class members into forms of common identity and of concerted action as conscious class members in relation to members of other classes. This second constitutive process is manifested in the development of class-specific collective actions and institutions. Here again we part ways with the Thompsonian current by not treating the making of a class as exclusively a process of conscious self-identification. The reason is our suspicion that the capability of a given class depends not only upon its degree of self-identity, but also upon its concrete economic location and the organizational and power resources available to it.

In a problematic specifically concerned with explaining twentieth-century socio-political developments, the questions of how and when classes are formed also raise other problems not encompassed within nineteenth-century historiographic discussion. In particular the question of class formation no longer is pivoted around one point in time, as in enquiries of the type: When can we for the first time talk of a self-conscious working class in England? Was the German proletariat at any point ever predominantly revolutionary? When did the Swedish working class become reformist?—And so on. Instead, in a perspective of the class analysis of contemporary social change, the problem arises of how to tackle class formation as an open-ended process with no fixed destination. Classes must be seen, not as veritable geological formations once they have acquired their original shape, but as phenomena in a constant process of formation, reproduction, re-formation and de-formation.

We will, therefore, have to distinguish crucial moments or periods of the formative process. We may, for instance, distinguish a 'founding' moment, a possible 'de-forming' moment, as well as possible 're-forming' moments or periods. We should also look out for 'mechanisms of reproduction' which prevent de-formations and re-formations. To take the case of the modern working class, the founding moment in the

subjective sense would be the emergence of class-specific concerted action: the first mass labour movements. An early example of working-class de-formation in a subjective sense, on the other hand, would be what happend in England after the smashing of Chartism. Prior to contemporary deindustrialization, and the mass unemployment of the Depression partially aside, a working-class de-formation in an objective sense was always at the same time a re-formation, such as that brought about by the rise of the giant us industrial corporations at the turn of the century. In the history of capitalist dictatorships, moreover, the current military regime in Chile stands out as unique in its deliberate attempt at a de-formation of the industrial working class, not only in the latter's conscious, subjective existence but also as a structured labour-force.

An ongoing process of capital accumulation, and the social structures specific to it, always entail a particular process of reproducing the classes of capital and wage-labour. Special mechanisms of reproduction are necessitated by ruptures or sudden accelerations in either the valorization or labour processes. Likewise government policies may affect the reproduction of classes, most importantly, perhaps, with regard to farmers and to the urban petty bourgoisie. At the level of the subjective workings of class formation, amongst the most important mechanisms are the practices of the labour movement itself and the related context of state labour policy. Both crucially affect the simple or expanded reproduction, the de-formation or re-formation, of the working class as a conscious collectivity.

Formative Outcomes

If we are going to use the results of class formation—conceived in a non-teleological sense—to explain ulterior social developments, the formative outcomes we should look for will depend on some theory of the determinants of class relations of power and of patterns of class conflict. Without a lengthy digression on this topic, let me simply suggest that the capacity of a given class to act and to achieve its objectives in relation to other classes (as well as to non-class social forces) will, within the parameters of the situation, depend upon two kinds of class attributes: (1) the intrinsic strength of the class in terms of the power resources available to it; and (2) the begennonic capacity of the class in the sense of its ability and opportunity to deploy its intrinsic strength for the purposes of isolating, cowing, dividing, and striking against an enemy. This proclivity for hegemony should not be regarded as exclusively an attribute of political leadership, but as something which also pertains to classes in a more general sense, as manifested in their overall social relations and practices. Yet how social forces will actually act in a given situation depends centrally upon the forms of action which have been institutionalized in their founding moments. Thus for some purposes the form of politics of a given class is a third important formative outcome.

Intrinsic class strength derives from the specific socio-economic relations that a given class is the bearer of. It varies within the same type of class according to the particular historical formation of that class within a concrete society in a specific period. Drawing upon previous theoretical

work,3 I would argue that the fundamental specific strength of a bourgeois class is its market-expanding capacity. This is a capacity which asserts the power of the market and of the logic of incessant capital accumulation against stable territorial forms of control, whether feudal or popular-democratic. The strength of a late-feudal aristocracy, on the other hand, might tentatively be ascribed to its seigneurial capacity; that is, its capacity to develop and to maintain personal social bonds of patronage and deference. In the case of the petty bourgeoisie of self-employed commodity producers and dealers, that its specific source of power probably resides in its autonomy: its non-dependence upon landowners, peasant communities, employers or workers. The strength of the modern working class, in contrast, is mainly based on its mode of existence as personally 'free' individuals concentrated and interrelated through increasingly cooperative processes of work. The fundamental power resource available to the working class, therefore, is its collectivity: especially its capacity for unity through interlocking, mutually supportive and concerted practices. The rise of the labour movement was above all a process of enlarging, deepening and structuring this collectivity.

To study class formation in its totality, therefore, implies that the degrees of bourgeois market expansiveness, petty-bourgeois autonomy and working-class collectivity must be treated as a set of variables of determining importance to ulterior societal development. Hitherto little attention, if any, has been paid to the making of the modern bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, while in the case of the proletariat the focus has been predominately upon the formation of states of consciousness.

Space/Time and Working-Class Collectivity

The notion of 'working-class collectivity' may be said to encompass several dimensions. Least important for the purposes of political analysis is probably the dimension which has elicited most historiographic and sociological attention: class collectivity as a closed-off local cultural community. The dimensions of working-class collectivity denoting class strength, and thus affecting the capacity of the working class to set an imprint upon societal development, arise on other terrain, and two kinds of collectivity would appear to have a particular significance.

First is the extent to which a given working class is constituted as a mational political collectivity: that is, the extent to which the public practices of the working class are coextensive with the territorial range of the supreme political power which the class must confront. The important range of variation here is not between national and international, but between national and sub-national, given the always strongly localized character of class formation. Marx stressed the importance of this dimension of class formation very strongly when he wrote in The

³ See Therborn, 'Enterprises, Markets, and States', IPSA Congress, Moscow 1979.

⁴ This may be said to be congruent with classical Marxist theory, which, however, has proven mistaken in its assertion of very narrow limits of bourgeois market-expanding capacity, whether because of the falling rate of profit or underconsumption.

⁵ Alternatively, the range of working-class collectivility should be measured in relation to that of the political system which the working-class movement wants to create in a national secession from an existing imperial or supranational state

Eighteenth Brumairs: In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class.' The degree of working-class national political cohesion may be most easily gauged from the range of its formal mass organizations. But such bonds of formal organization should be regarded as a special case of a more general set of interlocking class practices, whether organizationally structured or not.

The second crucial dimension of working-class collectivity we might call labour process collectivity. It derives from Marx's discussion in Capital of the rise of the 'collective worker' as the true bearer of productive technology and as the subject of the socialized labour process following the transition from 'formal' to 'real' subsumption of labour-power. It denotes the extent to which workers' collectivity is present at the point of production and to the degree to which it is coextensive with that of the power of capital.

Regimes of Accumulation

Class formation, of course, is always simultaneously class struggle, and the specific strength of a class, whatever its objective potentialities, has to be actualized and defended in formative battles. But a couple of particularly important determinants of the outcome in terms of class capacities may be further identified. One is what we might call the constraint of the regime of accumulation, borrowing but modifying and narrowing (in the sense of making it more sensitive to variations) a concept from Michel Aglietta and the so-called 'Regulation School' of Marxist political economy. 6 Very generally, this may be defined as the specific form of capital accumulation established in a particular locality viewed from the angle of class relations of power. With respect to working-class strength, then, this would refer to the system of capital accumulation in terms of its structuring of working-class collectivity, most directly what we have named labour-process collectivity. The major implication is that capital may be successfully accumulated in a large number of ways, but with widely varying effects upon working-class collectivity.

Three particular aspects of each regime of accumulation are especially pertinent in analysing the constraints upon working-class collectivity: the major source of wealth-making; the kind of labour-force recruited and employed; and the socio-technical relations of the labour process per ss. With regard to the first aspect, whatever its ultimate source in an intricate system of exchange, capitalist wealth, within a given territory, can be made and accumulated in several very different forms. For example, a capitalist economy dominated by industrial production and by the transport and storage of goods tends to produce working-class collectivity; while, in contrast, capital accumulated in wholesale trade, banking

⁶ Michel Aglietta, A Theory of Capitalist Regulation, NLB, London 1979, p. 66ff. The usage of the concept of a regime of accumulation in this context is much inspired by Mike Davis's 'Sunahine and the Open Shop. The Urbanization of Southern California, 1880–1930', unpublished ms. (1980)

and the capitalization of ground rent (e.g., the control of fertile land, attractive real estate, oil deposits, and so on) will produce far less proletarian unity or self-conscious organization. The second aspect signifies that the more homogenous the workforce, the more easily collectivity may develop out of it. Homogeneity, or heterogeneity, in this instance depends on the sources of labour-force recruitment, the skill structure of the work process, the system of renumeration and, more generally, the degree of integration of local labour markets.

The third aspect pertains to what we might call the space of autonomy available to workers as a collectivity in the labour process. This space is not simply a function of workers' skills and level of qualification, rather it is a variable dependent upon the relationship between the workers' skills and managerial skill. Dockers, for instance, are not usually counted among skilled workers, but they have traditionally had a developed collective control over their work process as they have faced little managerial skill in designing and supervising it. The importance of the relationship between the competencies of capitalist management and those of the collective worker also means, contrary to classical Marxist expectations, that large-scale industrial concentration does not necessarily strengthen the position of workers vis desir capital. The opposite could be the case if the managerial capacity of control outgrew that of the workers to unite at the point of production.

Differential Temporalities

Another determinant of working-class collectivity, especially in its national political dimension, is time. So far we have defined collectivity in terms of space: that is, in terms of its spatial range in relation to that of bourgeois productive and political power. But one of the key determinants of this collective spatiality is the time of the industrial working class's formation. Crucial here seems to be the relationship of political time and economic time, the time of industrial 'take off' and the time of political development. At least one major reason for the variation of this relationship is the international interdependence of political units, which means that we may discern—at least—a world political time, a local political time, a world economic time, and a local economic time.

Historiographic evidence would appear to support the idea that a coincidence of economic and political time—of industrial take-off and of popular struggles for political rights of participation—is the most propitious for the creation of a national working-class collectivity. Prior industrialization means a politically inexperienced proletariat, very vulnerable, in its loose organizational forms, to ruling-class repression: this seems to be one way, at least, of making simultaneous sense out of the successful smashing of English Chartism and the failure of the Wilhelmine Reich to suppress German Social Democracy. On the other hand, pre-industrial popular politics tended to take very localized forms, even in a country otherwise as centralized at the summit as France.

If, therefore, we regard the power base of a class as a class-specific resource, then the implications are clear that the class relations of power are not zero-sum games and that the power of one class is not necessarily

the weakness of its opposite. In his The Road to Power, Kautsky was well aware of this characteristic of class relations which sometimes has gotten lost in the best of contemporary analyses, such as Walter Korpi's, who ended his The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism by stating: 'When the competition among the wage-earners ceases, the foundation of capitalism has eroded.' However, the Marxists of the Second International were wrong in assuming that the ultimate determinant of what would happen to the economic system and to the global relations of social power was the balance between bourgeois and working-class intrinsic strength, or, more precisely, that sooner or later the collectivity of the working class would outweigh the strength of concentrated capital. The most obvious, but not exclusive reason for this was, of course, that socio-political relations never became reducible to a bipolar class conflict.

II. Processes and Possibilities of Hegemony

The hegemonic capacity of a class must, of course, be seen as dependent upon class strength, but the former remains irreducible to the latter. Two reasons for this are especially salient to our analysis. First, as just suggested, opposite classes are not negations of each other but have their own positive characteristics and their own specific bases of strength. Thus a high degree of working-class collectivity does not necessarily accompany a low degree of bourgeois market expansiveness or vice versa. This raises the question of how a class utilizes its power resources in relation to its opposite class as a special problem. Secondly, the development of capitalist societies has turned out to be irreducible to a two-class conflict, and has reproduced, in varying forms, a complexity of class as well as non-class forces and cleavages.

On the bases of what I have, elsewhere, called the three 'modes of interpellation'—telling us what is, what is right, and what is possible —it is possible to distinguish three fundamental hegemonic processes: (1) displacement, meaning that one's own accumulation of strength is concealed from view or rendered of secondary or nugatory importance to the other; (2) submission, making the other lose self-confidence in his ability to contest power or to rule; and (3) isolation, confronting the other with impossible odds. (It should be noted that even our broad conception of hegemony has its limit: not violence and dictatorship, but death. In strategic terms annihilation is the fourth logical option, although we do not include it among hegemonic processes. In actual class conflict it has played little part, although it is true that Stalinist parlance and practice included the 'liquidation of the kulaks as a class'. Annihilation has been more central in ethnic or religious conflicts.)

⁷ London 1979, p 324.

Our introduction of conceptions of begemony and hegemonic capacity into this context owes, of course, an important debt to Gramsci, but our usage will depart from orthodoxy without any attempt at exceptic extrapolation. Hegemonic capacity will be treated as a variable which classes have or have not; while hegemony will be very generally defined to mean the 'direction of society' Moreover, drawing upon the critique in my *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology* (NLB/Verso, London 1981, pp. 89, 108–9), I reject a rigid dichotomy between 'force' and 'consent' and stress that in the present context hegemony should not be counterposed to violence or 'dictatorship'

⁹ The Idealogy of Power, p. 18.

The Displacement of Class Conflict

The possibility and efficacy of these three processes depend to a large extent upon the concrete social mould into which a given class is formed. Thus displacements of class issues and class conflicts have in the modern period principally taken two forms: religious and national displacement. What determines the occurrence of these kinds of displacement is still a very under-theorized terrain, but a first overview of the issues involved and of the historical record may allow us to venture a few hypotheses.

Intrinsically there is no reason why religion and nationalism could not operate in opposite directions: displacing working-class advances and power as important issue in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, as well as the other way around. In reality, however, the former case has been extremely rare; religion seems almost never to have significantly operated to the advantage of the proletariat in capital/wage-labour relations. The only instance, moreover, where I can think of a clear-cut displacement of bourgeois antagonism to working-class power because of nationalism in a relatively developed capitalist society was the dramatic moment in Hungarian history in 1919 when Count Károlyi as head of the new bourgeois government handed over state power to the Hungarian Communists in face of the Rumanian invasion. The easiest explanation of this asymmetry, and perhaps the most cogent one, is that the bourgeoisie, and particularly its highest strata has never taken religion or nationalism quite as seriously as workers quite frequently have. If this supposition is true, it would also fit with the fact that religious mass movements, and less often nationalist ones, have at times had a popular, anti-big-capital as well as anti-socialist thrust. This holds, for instance, both for Abraham Kuyper's Calvinist 'Anti-Revolutionary' Party in Holland and for Dutch Catholicism, as well as for the pre-World War One Austrian Catholic Christian Social Party. Given the constellation of forces in a capitalist society this stance has probably proven more detrimental to the realization of working-class collectivity than have, per se, commodification or capital accumulation.

But there are religions and religions, nationalisms and nationalisms. Their specific effect upon class formation have been very different. As far as nationalism is concerned, a first distinction is between that of imperial nations and others. In the former case, nationalism has always tended to strengthen the bourgeoisie in relation to the working class. The nationalisms of non-imperial states have been more varied in their effects. Sometimes, for instance, nationalism can take on a popular-democratic 'small is beautiful' coloration, of which a moderate working-class movement may be widely seen as a legitimate political representative, as in Denmark and Sweden in the late 1930s when the Social Democratic premiers Thorvald Stauning and Per Albin Hannson became almost national father symbols. On the whole, nationalism in sovereign nations tends to operate as a hegemonic displacement of class conflict only intermittently, in conjunctures of international crisis.

Religion has had a more stable influence, if it has one at all. The established Lutheran and Anglican churches have been singularly unsuccessful in keeping workers from the class struggle, but the Catholic

and Calvinist churches have had more success. This difference seems to have little to do with theology per se. Catholicism has organized—in trade unions, parties and other organizations—a very significant part of the working class in Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland, but only a very limited stratum in Germany, Austria, France and pre-war Italy. The key determinant seems to be the church-state relation. Established state churches, like the Lutheran and Anglican, as well as the Dutch 'Hervormde Kerk', have been unable to keep any operative social control of the industrial proletariat. Dissenting denominations of the same theological trunk, on the other hand, have been more successful, as the durability of the Dutch 'Gereformeerde Kerke' testifies. Likewise Catholicism has been most successful politically in Catholic countries with a weak central state. It appears that it is in the cases where churches or denominations have been able to step into fissures of the state—either of state churches or of weak and distant secular states—that religion has been able to function as a major class-conflict displacement mechanism, and then invariably in favour of the bourgeoisie over the working class.

Submission and Isolation

It is possible to distinguish two major forms by which one class cows another into submission. Either the other has been inculcated with self-doubts already when the game begins, or it is produced during the conflict by the hegemonic class's resolute preparedness to inflict crushing damage on the other. In modern capitalist politics these two ways of reaching and maintaining a hegemonic position have each had their own particular socio-political base. Deferential submission derives its strength, first of all, from the survival of precapitalist social forces, relations and institutions: especially from late-feudal seigneurial forces and from pre-capitalist churches—both of which are linked up and integrated into capitalist development. Resigned submission, on the other hand, tends to follow rather naturally from historical experiences of defeat, for whatever reason.

Conjunctural experiences apart, there seems to be a structural basis for why some capitalist classes display a particularly ferocious resolution that raises the stakes of any working-class opposition. Likely, we might expect that a capitalist class with big power resources directly centralized into its own hands within an otherwise weak state structure—a class, therefore, whose relations to its own workers are only limitedly mediated and totalized by a broader state framework 10—to be particularly ruthless and intransigent in the class struggle. The impact, however relative, of state mediation in this respect is well known from the notonious cases of private colonial ultra-exploitation before a colonial state structure was established: the East India Company in Bengal, the Dutch East Indies and the Congo under Leopold II. It also seems that the extraordinary anti-union aggressivity of us corporations (by European standards),

¹⁰ See Therborn, What Does the Raing Class Do When It Rains, NLB, London 1978, pp 219—20, 228 ff The state should not be seen only as a centralization of ruling class power, but also as a totalization of social relations: as something which not only confronts the ruled and exploited, but also as something which constitutes their social coherence

might be explained in the same way: an enormous concentration of private capitalist power, linked to a friendly but weak central state. 11 And it further seems plausible that the victorious determination on the part of the leading us corporations to liquidate any working-class opposition—as exemplified by Carnegie at Homestead or Rockefeller in Colorado—was important in establishing a virtually unchallenged bourgeois hegemony in the United States. Among workers and trade unionists there arose a resigned submission which to an extraordinary extent recognized the capitalists' right to rule.

Isolation, the third basic hegemonic process operates, above all, along two paths. The more important one derives from the complexity of the capitalist class structures and takes the form of isolating the other from possible allies. In the formative period of industrial capital—labour relations, this referred mainly to the farming population and, secondarily, to self-employed artisans and small masters and tradesmen. Given the asymmetrical relation between labour and capital, the key distinction in this respect is the degree of autonomy of the rural petty bourgeoisie from seigneurial landowners and the urban bourgeoisie. The less autonomous, and the more isolated the working class, the more autonomous and hegemonic the bourgeoisie.

The other important mechanism of class isolation has been ethnic classifier. To the extent than an important sector of a class belongs to an ethnic minority or minorities, or has consisted of disfranchised foreigners, the more isolated the class. This has been a particularly important phenomena in countries of new settlement like the United States whose working class has been formed by waves of successive immigration, but it also pertains to nations like Switzerland whose capitalists already by the turn of the century recruited about a third of their workers from non-enfranchised immigrants, mainly Italians. In other words, one crucial aspect of the formation of the Swiss working class has been the permanent disfranchisement and ethnic isolation of a very substantial part of it.

The implications of these provisional theses about the dialectic of class formation and the development of power resources are summarized in Table 1 which depicts the two polar ideal-typical cases of modern advanced capitalism: 'Ultra-Capitalism and Labourite Capitalism'.

III. An Illustration: the Formation of the Swedish Working Class

What follows is an attempt to illustrate our theory of class formation by making reference to the concrete history of the Swedish working class.

The Industrial Revolution in Sweden is usually conceived to have commenced in the 1870s. In 1870 the country had about a hundred

 $^{^{11}}$ See James Holt, Trade Unionism in the British and U S. Steel Industries, 1880–1914. A Comparative Study', Labor History, 18, 1 (1977).

ULTRA-CAPITALIBM

LABOURITE CAPITALISM

1. Class Capacities

1.1 Bourgeois Market Expansiveness I.m., due to

Host, due to.

Small original market, melartic demand, technological restrictive-Large ongmal market, elastic demand, technological openiers

1.3 Worlding-Class Collectivity

1.2.1. National Collocdvity

Disjuncture of industrial formation of national polity of popular participation, national bourgeous politics preceding international working-class politics due to

Coincidence of networal industrial formation and formation of national polity of popular participation, international working-class control program amount guideant control Hust, done to.

La.s Labour Process Collectivity

Skilled homogeneous workforce working for little skilled and/or High, due to. Capital accumulation through industrial production remote employers Highly skilled management using little skilled labour and/or a Capital accumulation dominated by trade, finance and/or forms of

2. Heremony

ven beterogeneous in background, skills and renumeration

ground rent. bour force

due to

2.1 Displacement

Pro-beargeau, due to working chas

No religious displacement due to state church Small-entre, popular democratic nationalism Pre-leberr, due to Imperial nationalism and non-state church(es) holding sway over

2.2 Submission

Non-deformative! Worshing Class, due to

Strong sergineural residue adapted to capitalism

Defermental Working Class, due to

mic power in weak, friendly state

Non-expects or weak segmental links. Unrestrained working class due to scarce, highly skilled abour-power in weak, friendly state Unretrained bourgeouse because of strongly concentrated econo-

2.3 Isolation

Farmers dependent upon landowners and/or urban bourgeouse, urban petty bourgeouse small or dependent, ideological degradation of manual out labour of strong aristocratic traditions internal Working Class, due to

Ethnically separate and/or divided working class

Autonomy of farmers and of urban perty bourgeouse in an economy where industrialized bourgeouse is a small ethnic minority Central Working Class, due to-

thousand industrial workers, whose numbers then grew at decadal rates of 26%, 65% and 48%, reaching an average total in the first decade of this century of just above 300,000.12 But the country long remained predominantly agrarian and rural, in spite of rapid industrialization, indicating a small mercantile sector. Politically, Sweden was a bureaucratically governed monarchy, but with a substantial influence of the propertied farmers. The first real parliamentary government was not established until 1905, when about a fourth of adult males had the right to elect the Second Chamber, although usually only between a fourth and a fifth of those enfranchised made use of their vote. The main socio-political conflicts in the early and mid-nineteenth century centered on the abolition or maintenance of late-feudal taxes and military obligations tied to non-noble land; in the mid-1880s the tariff became the main issue, soon superseded by the suffrage question. A broad manhood suffrage to the Second Chamber came into effect only in 1911, and democracy followed from the outcome of World War One and the fear of revolution. 13

Industrialization thus clearly preceded a liberal politics as well as modern mass politics. On the other hand, whereas Swedish bourgeois politics was dragging its feet in an undeveloped society, Swedish socialist politics from the 1880s marched in step with world labour time. From more developed Denmark, trade-union conceptions and socialist ideology travelled through Sweden along the same route as agricultural and cultural innovations. They spread first to Malmö and the southern province of Scania, then jumped from there to the Stockholm area, and somewhat later to Gothenburg, before finally diffusing to the rest of the country.¹⁴

The first trade unions emerged in the 1870s, the first national trade-union federations in the latter half of the 1880s. By 1898 there was a national trade-union confederation, Lo, having a central leadership and to which only national federations of unions could be affiliated. This was the same year as Denmark, and, in fact, part of a joint Scandinavian trade-union decision, only six years later than the establishment of the German 'Generalkommission', three years after the French ogt and the same year as the founding of the 'Commission Syndicale' by the Belgian Workers Party. The British tuc, of course, was considerably older than any of these, but it did not yet provide a central national leadership. Socialist ideology, after an abortive beginning in the 1840s connected to the Communist League, was brought to Sweden from Denmark and Germany in 1881 by a wandering tailor, August Palm. In 1889 a national Social Democratic Workers' Party of Sweden was constituted: a date which should be compared to the German Gotha Congress of 1875, the

¹² L. Jorberg, Growth and Fluctuations of Swedish Industry, 1869-1912, Lund 1961, p. 51

¹³ The historical formation of the modern Swedish state is treated in Therborn, 'Structures of State, Forms of Politics: The Formation of a Bourgeois-Bureaucratic State in Sweden and Its Political Effects', 1982, unpublished.

¹⁴ The comparative reference for an analysis of the spread of the labour movement is taken from Knut Norberg, Jordanichelellemmen i Savrya, Lund 1968, pp. 208 ff. The international traiblazer for this king of comparative studies is the Lung geographer Torsten Hagerstrand; see his dissertation, 'Innovationsforloppet ur korologisk synpunkt', Lund 1953

1885 establishment of the Belgian Workers' Party, the Hainfeld Congress of Austrian Social Democracy in the winter of 1888–89, and the founding congress of the Second International later in 1889. Moreover, the Italian Socialist Party was only founded in 1892, the Social Democratic Workers' Party of the Netherlands was organized in 1894, divided French Socialism, assuming modern forms in the early 1880s, was finally united in 1905, and the Labour Representation Committee, forerunner of the Labour Party, was, of course, set up in 1900.

The point here is not the conventional thesis that 'feudalism begets socialism'. Indeed, the falseness of that idea is particularly clear in Scandinavia, where Norway, which never had any feudalism proper and had had a broad franchise since 1814 and a parliamentary government since 1884 (all during a period of weak dynastic union with Sweden), produced the most radical labour movement in Northern Europe. (The Norwegian Labour Party rallied to the Comintern in 1921 under a leadership which was heterodox but inspired by the American Industrial Workers of the World.) On the contrary, the point is that the German and Scandinavian pattern of modern working-class formation involved the establishment of national organizational structures for a class-conscious proletarian collectivity before any means of bourgeois or clerical political penetration of the working class had emerged. In Norway, to use the same example, a working-class party structure was established in 1887 and a national union confederation in 1898: all well in advance of the first major wave of industrialization in the decade just before World War One.

TABLE 2

Comparative Levels of Unionheation in 1905¹⁵

	All organical (%)	Organized in national confederation affiliated to the International Socretariat of Trade Unions (%)
Denmark	49	38
Britain	26	8
Sweden	2.4	18
Germany	2.4	18
France	18	4-5
Hungary	16	16
Austria	13	12
Belgium	10	2
Norway	5	4

The General Strikes of 1902 and 1909

In Sweden these national organizations had especially rapid success in recruiting decisive sectors of the working class and Sweden soon overtook older industrial societies in the degree of its class organization. By international standards, the Swedish unions, in particular, had a relative solidity that was remarkable. After the turn of the century, the

¹⁵ Calculations from Third International Report on the Trade Unions Movement in 1905 (Swedish Edition), Stockholm 1907, pp. 4-5.

Iron and Metal Workers' Union, for example, never had a high membership turnover in any year greater than 43%, whereas German unions often experienced turnovers of 100%. The way in which economics and politics, and their temporalities, were intertwined in Sweden, moreover, created very early a broad political unification of the working class. In May 1902 the Social Democratic Party called a three-day general strike for universal suffrage as a non-ultimative pressure upon Parliament. In all, 95,000 workers took apart: more than a fifth of all workers outside agriculture and domestic service. It was not yet quite a nationwide mobilization, as the agrarian provinces between Scania and Stockholm were untouched, as were the North (with the exception of the sawmill district around Gavle) and the old iron-working belt between Stockholm and Goteborg. Still the turnout must be regarded as impressive, and in terms of the percentage of the participating non-agrarian proletariat it was on par with the great Belgian general strike of the same year. In contrast to the Belgium events, however, the Swedish strike, called by the central Social Democratic (SAP) leadership, took place in a disciplined and peaceful manner, whereas the Belgian workers, explicitly left to their own initiatives by the POB leaders, engaged in riotous protest and violent confrontation. 16

Although the political strike of 1902 was immediately unsuccessful in obtaining the vote (as was the contemporaneous Belgian strike), it had epochal consequences for the development of Swedish industrial relations. It led directly to the organization of centralized, national employers' organizations; and, in spite of the country's size (fifteen times that of Belgium; twice that of Britain) and its diversified industrial structure, Swedish industrial relations and class conflict assumed a nationwide and synchronized character. This soon led to what was probably the most extensive industrial conflict in the history of any capitalist country (May 1968 in France perhaps excepted); the 1909 General Strike. It was called by the 10 in a defensive action against a series of lockouts by the employers' organizations. For one month, August, about 40% of the entire Swedish working class in mining, construction and manufacturing was locked in battle, against the employers. In all, about 300,000 workers took part for a shorter or longer time. 17 In comparison the famous nine-day British General Strike of 1926 comprised at most 25% of all insured employees. The largest and best prepared general strike of the French CGT in this era—the May Day strike for the eight-hour day in 1906—involved about 200,000 workers, or 4-5% of the non-agrarian workforce. 18

In the first elections for the Second Chamber based in principle on universal male suffrage (1911), Swedish Social Democracy scored 28.5%

¹⁷ Cf. Arbeitstatistik A.9, 'Redogóreise for lockouten och storstregken 1909', Stockholm 1910, p. 124, and S. Carlsson 'Den socials omgrouppengen i Sverige' in Samballs och rikodag, Stockholm 1966, vol. 1, pp. 280 and 295.

¹⁶ About 300,000 Belgian workers went on strike out of a non-agrarian working class three times the size of the Swedish. Strike figures from Marcel Liebman, *Les socialists belgis* 1885–1914, Brussels 1979, p. 137.

¹⁸ M. Morris, The General Struke, London 1976, pp. 21 and 28; and Peter Stearns, Revolutionary Syndicalism and French Labour, New Brunswick (N.J.) 1971, p. 24.

of the vote. What was remarkable was that the total vote for the Social Democrats, 172,000, exceeded the total number of votes given by non-agrarian workers by 20,000 or 14%. ¹⁹ While the sap certainly got a number of votes from semi-proletarianized small farmers in some areas, from self-employed artisans, some agricultural workers, and a sprinkling of support from other classes and strata, it seems reasonable to assume that at least two-thirds and possibly three-quarters of the non-agrarian workers who voted in the 1911 elections voted Social Democrat. The main problem was passivity and not organized clientelism; electoral turnout was very low in Sweden before World War Two, reaching and passing the 70% mark only in 1936—a level reached by the German electorate in 1887. ²⁰

The Growth of Labour-Process Collectivity

From the final defeat of the military ambitions of the Vasa dynasty at the hands of Petrine Russia, Sweden languished in a protracted geopolitical isolation until the Industrial Revolution suddenly stimulated a new demand for its primary products and capital goods. Sweden's entry into the world market as a specialized exporter and important secondary pole of capital accumulation was conditioned by several highly specific circumstances: first, an ample endowment of certain natural resources quality iron ore and timber—in high international demand; secondly, a small but old and highly developed technological tradition of iron-making; and, thirdly, an inheritance of sophisticated mercantile skills and connections from the pre-industrial age when Swedish merchant houses controlled the European trade in quality pig iron and bar castings. These circumstances, in turn, formed a basis of transition in the early twentieth century for a regime of accumulation dominated by a specialized engineering sector. By 1912 it already comprised 22% of the workforce and 18% of the production value of Swedish manufacturing. Indeed, by 1902 the engineering industry, embracing the most advanced and profitable of Swedish corporations, had assumed the leading role in the representation of industrial capital as a whole.21

The working class which faced this most advanced sector of the Swedish bourgeoisie was itself skilled and industrially experienced. From the standpoint of understanding the future evolution of Swedish industrial relations, it is important to emphasize that within the engineering sector there almost simultaneously developed a symmetry of internal class relations. Just as engineering capital tended to hegemonize industrial capital, so too did the Iron and Metal Workers' Union, Metall, (at least after 1905) come to form the leadership of the entire organized Swedish working class. From public investigations of the major engineering enterprises in 1899–1900, we have a fairly good profile of the workers who were the core of Metall's militancy. Of the 32 firms with 13,500

¹⁹ Rikadagamannavalen åren 1909–1911, Stockholm 1912, pp 30 and 41

²⁰ See S. Rokkan and J. Meyrrat (eds.), International Goods to Electoral Statistics, The Hague and Pans 1969.

²¹ The formation of the modern Swedish bourgeoisie is treated in Therborn, "The Bourgeoisie. Limitations of a Success Story', 1981, unpublished.

workers which were studied, 10 had more than 500 employees, 6 between 300 and 500, and 10 less than 300. All the workers, except 80, had completed primary education and almost one in five (18.7%) had some secondary education as well. Only 24% had a father with an agricultural occupation, whereas 41% had a father in metal manufacturing. 22 Thus the predominance of relatively educated workers from heriditary proletarian families concentrated in rather large firms testifies to the importance of the old tradition of mining and metallurgy as a foundation for the development of the modern engineering sector.

But modern engineering also represented distinct ruptures in skill and traditions. The union, organized nationally in 1888, was a child of modern industry, of workers outside the craft traditions of the guilds. Because of the way in which industrial and political time were related in Sweden, the skilled workers who formed the union considered themselves more in class than in craft terms. From the beginning the union sought to organize the entire iron and metal trades complex, regardless of skill, and its operational area included 27% of the workforce (and 30% of industrial value-added).²³ At its congress in April 1909 the union adopted the rule of industrial unionism, and a Metall motion to the LO Congress in the fall of 1909 demanding the general reorganization of the Swedish trade-union movement along industrial lines was, in principle, carried. Differentials between skilled and unskilled workers always seems to have been relatively small in Sweden. The Swedish Tariff Committee of 1882, for instance, found differentials amongst industrial workers in Sweden in the 1870s to be clearly lower than in Britain and the United States (although hardly different from various German cases). On a much firmer statistical basis, employers' statistics from the interwar period show that differentials in the engineering industry were smaller in Sweden than in any other Western European country.24

Out of Metall originated very early another extremely important aspect of Swedish industrial relations: the powerful union presence on the shopfloor. The inspiration, as usual, came from Denmark, where out of the survival of guild traditions had evolved a shop-steward system institutionalized by collective agreement. On Sweden's more industrial soil, this was turned into an organization principle of organizing 'workshop clubs' in every plant which comprised all union members and acted as a foundation for all higher trade-union structures. 25 This, of course, was not accomplished without struggle; but after the engineering lockout of 1905, which ended in a draw, this kind of union shopfloor organization spread and eventually became institutionalized across the entire national labour-market. From it, and from general union strength, derives the specific feature of plant-level industrial relations in Sweden:

1901, vol. I, p. 50

25 Calculated from Jorberg, ep. cst, pp. 385 ff. For a history of Metall see J. Lindgren, Sponsha Metallindustrinarbetarfrhandets historia I, Stockholm 1938, pp 87 ff.

Arbetsstatistik III. Undersekning av den mekaniska verksteds-industrie i Sverige, Stockholm

²⁴ Tullhoumittens underd dange betanhande av år 1882, vol. II, tuble 140 25 Lindgren, ep. at., pp 454 ff. The development of plant-level trade-unionism in Sweden, and within an international frame of reference, is being undertaken by Ander Kiellberg in our collaborative project on 'Sweden under Social Democracy'.

that there is no significant 'internal state' structure²⁶ (like the German Betriebsrat) nor a union—shop steward duality (as in Britain), but rather an institutionalized duality of union and management. Furthermore, the industrial character of Swedish unions in most cases ensures that this is a class duality of enterprise organization as well. In spite of the sometimes considerable distance between the plant union leadership and the rank and file, this is undoubtedly one of the most advanced examples of a labour-process collectivity achieved by a working class under large-scale industrial capitalism.

Problems of Hegemony

An old, non-imperial nation-state with a Lutheran state church offered the Swedish ruling classes little opportunity for displacement of class conflicts. For different reasons, neither side of the capital/labour divide in Sweden was particularly ruthless and determined in deploying its fighting capacities to the very end. Pressures and traditions of an old, well-established Rechtsstaat impeded both employers and workers. Moreover, the very centralization of employers' organization—which followed from the advance of industrial upon bourgeois political time as we have seen—restrained capitalist ultras in various ways.

Two historical examples may clarify what this politics of class restraint involved. First, the 1905 Engineering Agreement, which allowed a compromise settlement to the big lockout, came as a result of heavy pressure from a Conservative government, which in turn had to face mobilized public opinion as a result of the simultaneous crisis of the Norwegian secession. The compromise was negotiated by the undisputed leader of the engineering employers, John Bergström—head of Separator (the large dairy machinery firm) and of the Engineering Association. What is remarkable about the Agreement is that the man who signed it on behalf of the employers was a far-right politician who directed a corporation which still successfully staved off unionization. Almost alone amongst the major engineering companies, Separator managed to keep its works going with unorganized workers; but, under intense political pressure, Bernstrom signed a national agreement which, as we have seen, cleared the way for the advance of workplace unionism.

The second example is the aftermath of the General Strike of 1909. The Swedish Employers' Confederation, SAF, had since 1907 been led by a former high civil servant, devoted to the regulation of industrial relations rather than to the destruction of unions. In the trough of union weakness and an international recession, the textile employers offered the almost extinguished textile workers' union a national collective agreement. Amongst employers the only important group that attempted to smash the unions was the northern sawmill owners, many of them unaffiliated to the SAF.

²⁶ We owe the notion of an 'internal state', with reference to labour relations within enterprises, to Michael Burawoy's seminal *Manufacturing Count* (Chicago 1979), but we use it in a more restricted sense, referring to *general* representative institutions and grievance procedures in the enterprise, in contrast to institutionalized bargaining.

On the part of the workers there was no moment of triumph comparable to the employers' 1909. But the fact that Sweden had had no popular revolution at all, and no workers killed in industrial repression until 1931, made reformism and gradualism the dominant perspectives. An important difference between Sweden (or Scandinavia in general) and Germany and Austria was the position of the industrial classes in the overall class structure. In Sweden a long tradition of peasant independence—a recognised and unique fourth estate since the end of the Middle Ages—deprived the urban bourgeoisie of a secure rural conservative hinterland. In the formative period of the working class, the propertied and fairly prosperous farmers of southern Sweden were overwhelming conservative (in their own terms), but the suffrage question, the tariff and the controversy over military expenditure created broad areas of contact between the labour movement and liberal small farmers, especially in central and northern Sweden. In 1911, at a time when the SPD was still discussing the 'agrarian question' in the abstract, the Swedish Social Democrats were campaigning effectively in alliance with the Liberals in most of the country's rural areas. Thus the Swedish labour movement, in contrast to the Central European cases, was never relegated to a political or geographical ghetto.

The Swedish class pattern which emerged out of the formative period of 1870-1914 has undergone several important changes since then, but, so far, it has never experienced a decisive period of re-formation. Neutral Sweden with its internationally competitive capitalism has been evolving gradually. The combination of intrinsic strength and non-isolation has made the working class and the labour movement decisive forces in the making of modern Sweden. Hegemonically weak—as most recently demonstrated in the pathetic performance of the four bourgeois coalition governments, 1976-1980—the Swedish bourgeoiste, on the other hand, has had great expansive strength, continuously reproduced, and exemplified in the vigor of the capitalist system after forty-four years of uninterrupted Social Democractic government (1932-1976). In the 1970s it seemed that the strength of the Swedish working class had finally matured to the point of posing a major challenge to capitalism: thus demonstrating the vacuousness of various theories of 'integration'. Yet, at the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that left-wing Social Democratic theorists of this 'accumulation of working-class power' have mistaken the actual dialectics of capitalist politics, which is not decided by the strength of one class alone. Any adequate theory of capitalist politics, as a basis for socialist strategy, must take at its point of departure the global system of class formation as it is shaped both in its conflictual interaction and by the specific capacities of individual classes.

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State Power and Class Interests

Work done in the last fifteen years or so by people writing within a broad Marxist perspective on the subject of the state in capitalist society now fills a great many bookshelves; and however critical one may be of one or other article, book or trend, it is undoubtedly very useful that this work should be available. There is, however, a very large gap in the literature, in so far as very little of it is specifically concerned with the question of the autonomy of the state. How great a degree of autonomy does the state have in capitalist society? What purpose is its autonomy intended to serve? And what purposes does it actually serve? These and many other such questions are clearly of the greatest theoretical and practical importance, given the scope and actual or potential impact of state action upon the society over which the state presides, and often beyond. Yet, the issue has remained poorly explored and 'theorized' in the Marxist perspective. The present article is intended as a modest contribution to the work that needs to be done on it. 3

In the first volume of Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution, Hal Draper very usefully sets out what Marx and Engels said on the subject of the autonomy of the state, and shows how large a place it occupied in their political thinking and writings.4 It was also this that I was trying to suggest in an article on 'Marx and the State' published in 1965, where I noted, in a formulation which I do not find very satisfactory, that there was a 'secondary' view of the state in Marx (the first one being of the state as the 'instrument' of a ruling class so designated by virtue of its ownership or control—or both—of the main means of economic activity). This 'secondary' view was of the state 'as independent from and superior to all social classes, as being the dominant force in society rather than the instrument of a dominant class', with Bonapartism as 'the extreme manifestation of the state's independent role' in Marx's own lifetime. On the other hand, I also noted then that, for Marx, the Bonapartist state, however independent it may have been politically from any given class, remains, and cannot in a class society but remain, the protector of an economically and socially dominant class'. 6 Some years later, in the course of a review of Political Power and Social Classes by the late and greatly-missed Nicos Poulantzas, I reformulated the point by suggesting that a distinction had to be made between the state autonomously acting on behalf of the ruling class, and its acting at the behast of that class, the latter notion being, I said, 'a vulgar deformation of the thought of Marx and Engels' What I was rejecting there was the crude view of the state as a mere 'instrument' of the ruling class obediently acting at its dictation.

The Debate over State 'Autonomy'

However, it is undoubtedly to Poulantzas that belongs the credit for the most thorough exploration of the concept of the autonomy of the state; and it was he who coined the formulation which has remained the basis for most subsequent discussion of the subject, namely the 'relative autonomy of the state'. In essence, the view that this formulation encapsulated was that the state might indeed have a substantial degree of autonomy, but that, nevertheless, it remained for all practical purposes the state of the ruling class.

There has been considerable discussion among Marxists and others about

¹ For an interesting survey of the bulk of this literature, see Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State Mercust Thornes and Methods*, London 1982. The autonomy of the state, however, is not accorded any particular attention in this book and does not appear in the index.

² For a recent discussion of the subject by a 'mainstream' political scientist, which shows well how limited is an approach that takes no serious account of the state's capitalist context, see E Nordlinger, On the Antonomy of the Democratic State, New York 1981. Actual case studies are discussed in S D Krasner, Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and US Foreign Policy, New York 1978.

³ This article is exclusively concerned with 'late' capitalist societies. The question presents itself rather differently in countries in the capitalist world which are poorly developed, and very differently indeed in Soviet-type regimes. Here again senious theoretical work has only commenced.

⁴ Volume One: State and Bureaucracy, New York 1977, Chr 14-23

⁵ See my 'Marx and the State', in The Socielist Register 1967, London 1965, p. 283

⁶ Thud, p. 281

⁷ See my Poulanness and the Capitalist State', in NLR \$2 (November-December 1973), p 85, footnote 4.

the nature of the constraints and pressures which cause the state to serve the needs of capital—notably whether these constraints and pressures were 'structural' and impersonal, or produced by a ruling class armed with an arsenal of formidable weapons and resources. But beyond the differences that were expressed in these discussions, there was also a fundamental measure of agreement that the state was decisively constrained by forces external to it, and that the constraints originated in the national and international capitalist context in which it operated. The state might be constrained by the imperative requirement of capital for its reproduction and accumulation; or by the pressure from lobbies and organizations and agencies at the service of capital or one or other of its 'fractions'; or by the combined impact of these and international forces such as other capitalist states or the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. But then at any rate were the kind of factors which had to be taken into account to explain the actions of the state. As has occasionally been noted in this connection, this Marxist view of the state as impelled by forces external to it shares its 'problematic' with the liberal or 'democratic pluralist' view of the state, notwithstanding the other profound differences between them: whereas the Marxist view attributes the main constraints upon the state to capital or capitalists or both, the 'democractic pluralist' one attributes them to the various pressures exercised upon a basically democratic state by a plurality of competing groups, interests and parties in society. In both perspectives, the state does not originate action but responds to external forces: it may appear to be the 'historical subject', but is in fact the object of processes and forces at work in society.

It is this whole perspective which has come under challenge in recent years, not only from the right, which has long insisted on the primacy of the state, but from people strongly influenced by Marxism. Two notable examples of this challenge are Ellen Kay Trimberger's Revolution from Above: Military Bureaucrats and Development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt and Pern, 8 and more explicitly Theda Skocpol's much-acclaimed States and Social Revolution, 9 which is, however, not concerned with the contemporary state but with the state in relation to the French, Russian and Chinese Revolutions. 10

In the Marxist tradition, Skocpol writes, 'whatever the variations of its historical forms, the state as such is seen as a feature of all class-divided modes of production; and, invariably, the one necessary and inescapable function of the state—by definition—is to contain class conflict and to undertake other policies in support of the dominance of the surplus-appropriating and property-owning class.' This, she argues, fails to treat the state 'as an autonomous structure—a structure with a logic and interests of its own not necessarily equivalent to, or fused with, the interests of the dominant class in society or the full set of member groups in the polity¹¹

11 Skocpol, p 27.

New York 1977.
Cambridge 1979

¹⁰ See also Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule", Socielus Repolition 33, (May—June 7977); and Beyond Relative Autonomy", in The Socielus Register 1980, London 1980, where he speaks of the 'relative autonomy thesis' as a 'cosmetic modification of Marxism's tendency to reduce state power to class power'. (p. 229)

This seems to me to be a valid criticism: the Marxist tradition does tend to under-emphasize or simply to ignore the fact that the state does have interests of its own or, to put it rather more appropriately, that the people who run it believe it has and do themselves have interests of their own. The failure to make due allowance for this naturally inhibits or prevents the exploration of the ways in which class interests and state interests are related and reconciled.

For her part, Skocpol goes much further than merely stating that the state has interests of its own or that those who run it do have such interests. For she goes on to argue that the Marxist perspective makes it 'virtually impossible even to raise the possibility that fundamental conflicts of interest might arise between the existing dominant class or set of groups, on the one hand, and the state rulers on the other'. 12 But contrary to what she appears to believe, this second argument does not follow from the first, and in fact raises an entirely different question, of great interest, but which should not be confused with the first one. That first proposition refers to the interests which the state may have of its own, and leaves open the question of how these may be reconciled with other interests in society. The second proposition, on the other hand, assumes that the state may have interests 'fundamentally' opposed to those of all forces and interests in society. This is a much stronger version of the autonomy of the state, and needs to be discussed separately from the other, and much weaker, one.

The Scope of State Action

Perhaps the first thing to note in this discussion is how very large is the sphere of action which the state in capitalist societies does have in all areas of life. It is deeply and pervasively involved in every aspect of economic life. It is a permanent and active presence in class conflict and in every other kind of conflict. It plays a great and growing role in the manipulation of opinion and in the 'engineering of consent'. It has, in Max Weber's famous phrase, a 'monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force'. It is alone responsible for international affairs and for deciding what the level and character of the country's armaments should be.

To speak of 'the state' in this manner is of course to use a shorthand which can be misleading. The reference is to certain people who are in charge of the executive power of the state—presidents, prime ministers, their cabinets and their top civilian and military advisers. But this assumes a unity of views and interests which may not exist: great divisions between the people concerned are in fact very common, with ministers at odds with their colleagues, and civilian and military advisers at odds with their political superiors. If these divisions are so deep as to make a workable compromise impossible and as to paralyse the executive power, some kind of reconstruction of the decision-making apparatus has to occur. In the end, decisions do have to be made; and it is the executive power which makes them, 'on its own'.

¹² Ibal

No doubt, there are many powerful influences and constraints, from outside the state, international as well as indigenous, which affect the nature of the decisions taken; and these may well be very strong and compelling. But it is ultimately a very small group of people in the state—often a single person—who decide what is to be done or not done; and it is only in very exceptional cases that those who make the decisions are left with no range of choice at all. Much more often, there is some degree of choice: even where governments are subjected to the imperative will of other governments, they are usually left with some freedom of decision in relation to matters which directly and greatly affect the lives of those whom they govern. Perhaps the best way to highlight the meaning of the autonomy of the state is to note that if nuclear war should occur, either between the 'superpowers' or between lesser powers armed with the capacity to wage such a war, it will occur because governments will have so decided, without reference to anybody else. There is no democractic procedure for starting a nuclear f

The degree of autonomy which the state enjoys for most purposes in relation to social forces in capitalist society depends above all on the extent to which class struggle and pressure from below challenge the hegemony of the class which is dominant in such a society. Where a dominant class is truly hegemonic in economic, social, political and cultural terms, and therefore free from any major and effective challenge from below, the chances are that the state itself will also be subject to its hegemony, and that it will be greatly constrained by the various forms of class power which the dominant class has at its disposal. Where, on the other hand, the hegemony of a dominant class is persistently and strongly challenged, the autonomy of the state is likely to be substantial, to the point where, in conditions of intense class struggle and political instability, it may assume 'Bonapartist' and authoritarian forms, and emancipate itself from constraining constitutional checks and controls.

It is worth noting that the capitalist class has very seldom enjoyed anything like full hegemony in economic, social, political and cultural terms. One major capitalist country where it has come nearest to such hegemony is the United States—the prime example in the capitalist world of a society where business has not had to share power with an entrenched aristocracy, and where it has also been able to avoid the emergence of a serious political challenge by organized labour. Everywhere else, business has had to reach an accomodation with previously established social forces, and meet the challenge of labour. Moreover, it has also had to deal with state structures of ancient provenance and encrusted power that were strongly resistant to change. Capitalist hegemony has therefore been much more contested and partial in the rest of the 'late' capitalist world than in the United States; and even in the United States, economic and social contradictions and pressure from below, particularly since the Great Depression, have strengthened the state and given it greater autonomy than it enjoyed between, say, the Civil War and the Great Depression.

The idea that class struggle is of decisive importance in determining the

nature and form of the state is a familiar part of classical Marxism; 13 and so too is the view that the purpose of the state's autonomy is the better to protect and serve the existing social order and the dominant class which is the main beneficiary of that social order. As I noted earlier, it is this latter proposition which is under challenge; and rightly so. For the question: What is the state's autonomy for?' cannot simply be answered in these familiar terms: the point is not that these terms are wrong; but rather that they are inadequate to explain the dynamic of state action and cannot provide a satisfactory 'model' of the state in relation to society in a capitalist context. The dynamic of state action is explained by Marxism in terms of the imperative requirements of capital or the inexorable pressure of capitalists; and these are indeed of very great importance. But to focus exclusively on them is to leave out of account other very powerful impulses to state action generated from within the state by the people who are in charge of the decision-making power. These impulses undoubtedly exist; and they cannot be taken to be synonymous with the purposes of dominant classes.

The Impulses of Executive Power

The two main impulses which are generated by the executive power of the state are self-interest on the one hand, and a conception of the 'national interest' on the other.

People in power wish for the most part to retain it. It is a spurious kind of worldy wisdom which affirms that all 'politicians' and people in power are moved by nothing but self-interest and are only concerned to serve themselves by acquiring and clinging to office. But it is naive to think that, whatever else moves such people, they are not also moved by self-interest, meaning above all the wish to obtain and retain power. Of one man of power, the late Lyndon Johnson, President of the United States, it has been said that he exhibited from early days 'the desire to dominate, the need to dominate, to bend others to his will ... the overbearingness with subordinates that was as striking as the obsequiousness with superiors . . . the viciousness and cruelty, the joy in breaking backs and keeping them broken, the urge not just to defeat but to destroy... above all, the ambition, the all-encompassing personal ambition that made issues impediments and scruples superfluous. And present also was the fear—the loneliness, the terrors, the insecurities that underlay, and made savage, the aggressiveness, the energy and the ambition,'14

14 The quotation appears in Mutray Kempton, 'The Great Lobbyist', in New York Review of Books, 17 February 1983, and is drawn from R. A. Caro, The Years of Lyndon Johnson. The Path to Paper, New York 1982

¹³ See Marx's famous description of the Second Empire as 'the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired, the faculty of roling the nation' (The Civil War in France, in Selected Warks (1950), I, p. 470) Also Engels's equally well-known remark 'By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power, as ostensible mediator, acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both' (The Origin of the Family, Property and the State, ibid., II, p. 290). For many other such examples, see Draper, sp. at

No doubt, Lyndon Johnson was a very repulsive politician. But the sentiments and motives ascribed to him are hardly unique; and the different terms that may be used to describe the drives of other men and women in power do not affect the point: this is that there are many people for whom the exercise of great power is an exceedingly satisfying experience, for whose sake acts of extraordinary cruelty have been committed throughout history. The point would hardly be worth making if it was not so imperfectly integrated into the Marxist view of the state.

The reason for this, or at least one reason for it, has already been touched on, and lies in Marxism's emphasis on economic and social processes as determinants of political action. The emphasis is perfectly legitimate but is easily deformed into an under-estimation of the weight which political processes themselves do have. The tendency to one form or another of 'economic reductionism' has had a marked influence on the Marxist discussion of politics and the state, even when the deformation has been acknowledged and pledges made to correct it.

The state is not the only institution which makes the exercise of great power possible; but it is by far the most important one. Nor does it only make possible the exercise of power as such, crucial though that is: it is also the source of high salaries, status, privilege and access to well-paid and otherwise desirable positions outside the state. Nor is this only relevant for those people who are at the very center of the decision-making process. Thousands of people in the upper reaches of the state are involved, whom the state provides with high salaries and all that goes with state service at this level, not only in government departments, but also in innumerable boards, commissions, councils and other public bodies. Such people constitute a 'state bourgeoisie', linked to but separate from those who are in charge of corporate capitalist enterprise. Their first concern is naturally with their jobs and careers. Capitalist interests are in no danger of being overlooked; but they are not the sole or primary concern of these office holders.

Those who seek state power find it easy to persuade themselves that their achievement of it, and their continued hold on it, are synonymous with the 'national interest', whose service, they proclaim, is their paramount and overriding consideration. Here too, it would be short-sighted to treat these proclamations as mere sham, and as elicited purely by the wish to obtain and retain state power. It is much more reasonable to think that people in power are moved by what they conceive to be the 'national interest', in addition to being deeply concerned with their own jobs. This is all the more likely to be the case in that the 'national interest' is woven into a larger and very powerful sentiment, namely nationalism. There was in classical Marxism the hope and belief that a different sentiment, namely

¹⁵ A recent example is provided by Sir David McNee, who retired in 1982 as Metropolitan Police Commissioner, and who was appointed non-executive chairman of the Scottish Express Newspapers: 'Sir David, who left last September on an index-linked pension of £22,000, will be paid between £5,000 and £10,000 for the job He recently sold his memoirs to the Sandey Mirror for £120,000, joined Clydesdale Bank for £5,000 a year is non-executive director, and in November the British Airways Board for £10,000 a year. In December he was nominated president of the National Bible Society of Scotland' (The Guardon, 27 January 1983).

proletarian or revolutionary internationalism, would move not only the working class but its leaders, in opposition but also in power. The collapse of internationalism in 1914 dealt a shattering blow to this hope; and so, in different ways, did the fact that the Soviet regime alone survived the revolutionary convulsions which followed the First World War. Even if manifestations of revolutionary internationalism may occasionally be read into the actions of people in power (Cuba in Africa?), it is nationalism and what is taken to be the 'national interest' which everywhere form the main and even the exclusive frame of reference for state action today; and this is easily compatible with the pursuit of the self-interest of those who control state power.

If it is agreed that self-interest and a conception of the 'national interest' have been and are powerful influences in shaping the policies and actions of the people in control of state power, the question which immediately arises is how this relates to the interests of the dominant class—in other words, what is the relationship of state power to class interests?

The answer is that, throughout the history of capitalism, that relationship has on the whole been very good. The people in charge of the state have generally been strongly imbued with the belief that the 'national interest' was bound up with the well-being of capitalist enterprise, or at least that no conceivable alternative arrangement, least of all socialism, could possibly be more advantageous to the 'national interest'; and they have therefore been particularly attentive to the interests of capitalist enterprise, whatever view they might take of capitalists. However, being attentive to these interests might well mean refusing to pay heed to capitalist wishes: very often, it was precisely because they wanted to y ensure the best conditions for capitalism that they did things which ran counter to the wishes of capitalists.

. A certain tension between state power and class interests is in fact √inevitable, however good their relationship may fundamentally be. The dynamic of capitalism is the reproduction and accumulation of capital, and the maximization of long-term profit for each individual firm. This is the paramount aim, the all but exclusive concern of those who are in charge of the private sector of economic life: all else passes through this and must be subordinate to it. But this cannot be the dynamic of state power. For those who control that power, the 'national interst' in essence requires the defence of the existing social order against any internal challenge to it, and also the best defence they believe they can mount against commercial, military and ideological competition from other states. Of course, this may also include, and often has included, offensive action abroad. These twin concerns encompass, or at least seek to encompass, capitalist class interests: but this is not at all the same as saying that state action and these class interests precisely coincide. In fact, there is always likely to be some unhingement between what the state does, / however much those who control it may be devoted to capitalist interests, and these interests. The state, for instance, needs revenue; and it cannot obtain all the revenue it needs from the subordinate classes. It must levy taxes upon capital and capitalists, and thereby drain off some of the surplus which accrues to them; hence the constant lamentations of J businessmen, large and small, about the state's taxation policies, and their

complaints that the state, in its blind bureaucratic and greedy bungling, is forever undermining private enterprise. Similarly with reform and regulation: the containment of pressure from below, and indeed the maintenance of a viable and efficient labour force, demand that the state should undertake some measures of reform and regulation, which capital finds disagreeable and constraining, and which it certainly would not undertake on its own.

State and Class: a Partnership?

In short, an accurate and realistic 'model' of the relationship between the dominant class in advanced capitalist societies and the state is one of partnership between two different, separate forces, linked to each other by manyly threads, yet each having its own separate sphere of concerns. The terms of that partnership are not fixed but constantly shifting, and affected by many different circumstances, and notably by the state of class struggle. It is not at any rate a partnership in which the state may be taken necessarily to be the junior partner. On the contrary, the contradictions and shortcomings of capitalism, and the class pressures and social tensions this produces, require the state to assume an ever more pronounced role in the defence of the social order. The end of that process is one form or another of 'Bonapartism'. Meanwhile, it makes for a steady inflation of state power within the framework of a capitalist-democratic order whose democratic features are under permanent threat from the partnership of state and capital.

This 'model' of partnership seeks to give due importance to the independent and 'self-regarding' role of the state, and to make full allowance for what might be called the Machiavellian dimension of state action, which Marxism's 'class-reductionist' tendencies have obscured. ¹⁶ This is not a question of the 'primacy of politics': that formulation goes, rather too far the other way, and suffers from a 'state-reductionist' bias.

By speaking of partnership between the state and the dominant class, I seek to avoid both forms of 'reductionism': the notion makes allowance for all the space which political and state action obviously has in practice; but it also acknowledges a capitalist context which profoundly affects everything the state does, particularly in economic matters where capitalist interests are directly involved. The idea of the 'primacy of politics' tends to abstract from the hard reality of this capitalist context: but no government can be indifferent to it. So long as a government works within it, so long does the partnership hold. If it seeks to pose a fundamental threat to capitalist interests, or a threat which capitalist interests judge to be fundamental, the partnership is dissolved and replaced by the determination of these interests to see the government destroyed. Nor in such a case is that determination likely to be confined to

¹⁶ Thus, Goran Therborn dissolves state power into class power when he asserts that 'state power is a relation between social class forces expressed in the content of state policies' (Whit Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules², Ni.a. London 1978, p. 34). Note also Jessop's characterization of Poulantizas's view of the state 'The state reflects and condenses all the contradictions in a class-divided social formation—political practices are always class practices. . state power is always the power of a definite class to whose interests the state corresponds' (op cit., p. 159).

capitalist interests: it would be shared to the full by many other forces in society, and by people located in the state itself—military people, top civil servants, and many others.

The notion of partnership is scarcely contradicted by the experience of the governments of the left which have come to power (or to office) in capitalist countries in this century. For all practical purposes, the partnership has endured between such governments and capital, perhaps with more tensions and disagreements than when governments of the if right have been in office, but not so as to bring about a complete break in relations. Great antagonism to the government might be expressed by members of the dominant class, business interests and their many agencies; but there was always a clear understanding on the part of these class forces that, even though the government might be doing some reprehensible things, it was also seeking to maintain the existing social N order, to help business, to discipline and subdue labour, and to defend, in international and defence matters (and in colonial ones in an earlier day), what dominant class interests and the government both agreed to be the 'national interest'. In any case, capital also knew that it was only a small part of the state that was now in alien hands: the top reaches of the civil service, the police, the military, the judiciary remained more or less intact, and vigilantly concerned to limit the damage which the government might do. Moreover, the hegemony exercised by the dominant class in civil society was never much affected by the arrival in office of a government of the left. All the 'earthworks' which that dominant class occupied remained under its control. On the other hand, governments of the left have always sought to contain the activism of their own supporters and to bid them wait patiently and obediently for socialist ministers to get on with their tasks. The one case where the partnership between a government of the left and dominant class interests was broken was that of Salvador Allende's government in Chile. Given that break, the government's only hope of obviating the dangers which it faced was √ to forge a new partnership between itself and the subordinate classes. It was unable to achieve this, or did not sufficiently strive to achieve it. Its I autonomy was also its death warrant.

This proposed model of partnership stands in opposition to Theda Skocpol's model of the 'state for itself' referred to earlier. According to that model, it will be recalled, 'fundamental conflicts of interest might arise between the existing dominant class or set of groups, on the one hand, and the state rulers on the other'. In this view, the state would be no one's partner or ally: it would be 'for itself' and against all classes and groups in society. In relation to countries with a solid class structure and a well-entrenched dominant class, such a model does not seem appropriate. For it is surely very difficult to see, in such countries, what the interests of 'state rulers' would be which would also place these rulers in fundamental conflict with all classes or groups in society. I have already noted that there are things which the state wants and does, and which are very irksome to the dominant class: but this is a very different matter from there being a fundamental conflict between them. Moreover, if such a conflict between them did occur, the state would in all likelihood be acting in ways that would favour some other class or classes. In other words, a new partnership would have been created; or the state would be

acting, for whatever reason, in favour of a class or classes without any such partnership having been established. In neither case would the state of be 'neutral', or acting solely 'for itself'.

Of course, state rulers, in pursuing what they conceive to be their interest, and the 'national interest', may use the autonomy they have to adopt policies and take actions which turn out to be disadvantageous or disastrous for everybody (quite possibly including those who took the decisions). History is full of such failures of statecraft; and recent examples abound. Thus, it may be argued that the American decision to wage war in Vietnam was very disadvantageous to all classes in the United States, not to speak of the disaster it represented for the people of Vietnam. But it can hardly be claimed that the decision to wage war in Vietnam was taken in the interests of state rulers in fundamental | opposition to the interests of the capitalist class in the United States. On the contrary, there was a perfectly good 'fit' between the two, as witness. the support which most capitalist interests there gave to the war until its very end. Another instance is that of Hitler's expansionist ventures, including his decision to take Germany into war. This turned out badly for everybody concerned: but there was no fundamental opposition, between business interests in Germany and the Nazi leaders; and here again, there was ample support from business for Nazi policies. In this ! case, however, it is possible to argue that the Nazi regime provides an example of the interests of those in charge of the state being fundamentally opposed to the interests of everybody else: the war was clearly lost by 1943, and the only people whose interest it was not to bring it to an end were the Nazi leaders. Other instances of this sort could no doubt be adduced. But they do not provide a firm basis for a 'model' of the state as being 'for itself' and against everybody else.

State Power under Socialism

It seems to me that the 'model' of partnership advanced here can be useful in defining the relationship of the state to the working class in a socialist society. In the classical Marxist perspective, this relationship is defined in terms of the dictatorship of the proletariat. As may be deduced from Marx's Crail War in France, and as it is presented in Lenin's The State and Revolution, this means in effect the virtual dissolution of state power into become largely residual and subordinate. Goran Therborn is well within this tradition in saying that 'a strategy for socialism or for a transitional stage of "advanced democracy" must dismantle the government, administration, judicial and repressive apparatus of the existing bourgeois state', and in urging 'a political programme of changes in the organization of the state that will bring about a popular democracy'. 17

For their part, both social democratic and Communist parties have adopted perspectives and strategies of a very different kind, according to which class power is strictly subordinated to state power. For social democracy, class power has always tended to mean the deployment of electoral strength by the working class and the election of a social

¹⁷ Therborn, p. 25.

democratic or labour government. Once this is achieved, the task of the 'voters' is done, save for the routine activities of the party or parties which support the government. Indeed, any manifestation of class power (for instance strike action) is frowned upon, disowned and opposed.

Communist parties place a greater emphasis in their pronouncements and programmes on grassroots activism, but the focus tends to be on the achievement of legislative and ministerial power in what is in effect the # old state with a partially renewed personnel. Whatever might happen to the hegemony of the dominant class, it is not on this basis likely to be inherited by the hitherto subordinate classes. Partnership between state (power and class power in a socialist context means something rather different. It requires the achievement of real power by organs of popular representation in all spheres of life, from the workplace to local government; and it also involves the thorough democratization of the state system and the strengthening of democratic control upon every aspect of it. But it nevertheless also means that state power endures and that the state does not, in any strong sense, 'wither away'. It must, in fact, long continue to remain in being and carry out many functions which it alone can fulfil. Indeed, it requires some degree of autonomy to carry them out. For the working class is not a homogeneous bloc, with one clear interest and one voice; and the state alone is capable of acting as a mediator between the 'fractions' which constitute the newly hegemonic majority. Furthermore, it is also upon the state that falls a large part of the responsibility for safeguarding the personal, civic and political freedoms which are intrinsic to the notion of socialist citizenship. In this sense, and with proper controls, state power in a post-capitalist society is not in conflict with class power, but its essential complement.

Marx lives on in l

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Karl Marx's Children

In the winter of 1845-6, during which Marx worked with Engels on *The German Ideology*, Mrs Marx's brother, the unsatisfactory Edgar, came to stay with the family in Brussels.* Though she had disclaimed tender feelings for him, and disapproved of this inveterate sponger of no settled occupation at the age of 26, she was genuinely fond of him and glad that he now sought and found employment in a newspaper office. There he was joined in the spring by one of Marx's closest friends and a fellow revolutionary, Wilhelm Wolff, known as Lupus, to whom Marx was to dedicate the first volume of *Das Kapital*. At the start of the year 1846 Marx and Engels set up the Brussels Communist Corresponding Committee with the aim of providing information and an exchange of ideas between German, French and English socialists. It was not a political party but a loose organization whose main adherents were in Paris to which, in August, Engels was sent as a delegate from the Brussels Committee, living from October that year until the following March at 23 rue de Lille.

Meanwhile that spring, Mrs Marx, this time alone, visited her mother who was ill and thought to be dying. She was in fact to live for another ten years and, once her recovery was assured, Mrs Marx returned to Brussels where, for reasons of financial stringency, the family gave up the house in the rue de l'Alliance and in May—Jenny now just two and Laura eight months—went back to live in the little Bois sauvage pension until 23 October when they moved to 42 rue d'Orléans in the faubourg d'Ixelles. Here the boy Edgar, named after the uncle who stood as titular godfather, was born. Though he was given the name Edgar, and only Edgar, his mother later confided to a friend that, should her mother-in-law, improbably, ever loosen the purse-strings again, the 'Edgar' might, for the occasion, be suppressed and the name Henry (Heinrich)—that of his father and paternal grandfather—be assumed. This did not happen and Edgar he remained, though generally known as Musch, or Mouche.

It was at this period that the League of the Just—originally founded in the mid-1830s in Paris by German artisans and spreading to England, Germany, Switzerland and Sweden—was reorganized and changed its name to the Communist League. Having persuaded Marx in Brussels and Engels in Paris to join its ranks, they in their turn persuaded the League to adopt their principles of socialism. That was in February 1847 and, under its new title, the League held its first congress from 2 to 9 June—to which Engels and Wilhelm Wolff went—in London where the executive committee established itself in November 1846 following ceaseless persecution by the Paris police. A second congress was held in the same year, from 29 November until 8 December, attended by both Marx and Engels who played a leading part in the proceedings and were assigned the task of writing a manifesto.

During this first year of Edgar's life, when his father was writing *The Powerty of Philosophy*—published simultaneously in Brussels and Paris in July 1847—he thrived, though he was not, it appears, of those who have only to be seen to be admired. His mother, indeed, took an exceedingly poor view of his looks. Her girls were lovely, she wrote to Mrs Herwegh, the wife of the poet, but 'the boy, the boy', she moaned, 'is a little monster'; while she told Lina Schoeler, the long-term fiancée though never the bride of Edgar von Westphalen, that he was assuredly no Adonis. She was thankful, she said, that, at a year, he had lost some of his earlier frightfulness (she used the word Schrecklichkeit), but she did wish this whey-faced infant would not always wear such a bellicose expression.

That was in January 1848, at the onset of the year of revolutions, 'the Springtime of the Nations', as it has been called, one of whose early side-effects was Engels's expulsion from France on the 29th. He was back in Brussels two days later, by which time the central authority of the League had been pressing for the manifesto, going so far as to say that if Marx did not deliver it by 1 February, he should return all the documents entrusted to him. It must have arrived by that date, for The Manifesto of the Communist Party was published in London on or about 24 February, in

^{*} Excerpted, with permission, from 'Karl Marx's Children: Family Life 1844–1855', in Betty Matthews (ed), Marx A Hundred Years On, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1983, £4-95

German, with the imprint Gedruckt in der Office der Bildungsgesellschaft für Arbeiter (printed in the office of the Workers' Educational Society). 1

Though conceived by both Marx and Engels, to some extent derived from ideas already expressed in their joint work *The German Ideology*, and largely based upon Engels's two documents—the so-called *Credo* (or *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith*) and the *Principles of Communism*—the *Manifesto* was in fact written by Marx alone, Engels having gone back to Paris. The manuscript, save for one page in a notebook dated Brussels, December 1847, has vanished.

A Family in Exile

Events now moved swiftly: the French government collapsed, the King² abdicated, fleeing to England, and on 26 February the French (Second) Republic was proclaimed. It did not take long for the Belgian authorities to pounce. On 2 March King Leopold issued a decree expelling Marx forthwith. Two days later, after nightfall, as he was preparing to leave, the police burst into his house and arrested him. As they took him away to the Amigo prison his wife rushed out in a vain attempt to follow, then frantically sought help, hurrying in the dark from one friend's house to another until she, too, was seized by the police and unceremoniously flung into a lock-up with vagrants and prostitutes. From its window the next morning she saw her husband being marched off under military guard. Later that day she was lengthily interrogated and only in the evening allowed to go home to her children. Meanwhile Marx reached Paris where he put up on the boulevard Beaumarchais in Ménilmontant.

It could be said that they got off lightly: Wilhelm Wolff was taken into custody on 27 February, before the formal order for his arrest and expulsion, and was so brutally maltreated that, being punched and kicked in the face, he almost lost the sight of one eye. With the new situation in France, the family could now have settled there; but events in Germany, where insurrections broke out in mid-March, determined Marx to go back to his native country. Early in April both he and Engels went to Mainz and, on the 11th, Marx reached Cologne where he intended to stay.

Mrs Marx, having abandoned or pawned her belongings in Brussels, briefly to rejoin her husband in Paris, now went to Trier again where she was able to introduce Laura and Edgar to their grandmother. She did not go to Cologne until Marx had permission to reside there. Then, on I June, the first number of the New Rhemische Zeitung appeared under the editorship of Marx and Engels. The editorial staff included Wilhelm Wolff, their old companion, a teacher by profession; Ferdinand Wolff, a journalist, known as Red Wolf; Ernst Dronke, a writer; George Weerth,

¹ It appeared anonymously and, although an English translation, published in Julian Harney's Rol Republican in November 1850, attributed the work to Charles Marx and Frederic Engels, it was not until the 1872 German edition, when it was retitled The Communit Manifesto, that, as a separate publication it bore the authors' names. The term 'scientific socialism' was first used in Engels's Introduction to the 1892 edition.

² Louis-Philippe, Duke of Oriesns (1773–1850) who adopted the name Philippe-Egalité on accepting the crown in August 1850.

a poet and the features editor of the paper; and Ferdinand Freiligrath, also a poet. All were members of the Communist League and all of them at some stage emigrated to England.

By mid-August the paper had reached a daily circulation of 5,000 copies; but by then the financial backers has lost their nerve and withdrawn their support. Marx travelled to Berlin and Vienna to try to raise funds. However, on 26 September Cologne was declared in a state of siege, an order was out for Engels's arrest and the paper was suspended for a week. This further undermined its precarious finances which Marx then personally shouldered, using up the remains of the inheritance from his father who had died ten years earlier.

Before the year was out counter-revolution was gaining ground throughout Europe: a state of siege was declared in Berlin on 12 November while, in France, Louis Bonaparte according to Marx 'a crafty old roue' who bore the name simply because French law forbade enquiries into paternity—was elected president of the Republic 2 month later and, following an investigation by the Cologne Public Prosecutor, both Marx and Engels were formally charged in early February 1849 with 'insulting the authorities'. A separate case was brought against Marx for 'incitement to revolt', though at the end of the two court proceedings they were acquitted. On 10 May martial law was imposed throughout Prussia. Nine days later, availing themselves of the fact that in December 1845 Marx had renounced his Prussian citizenship, the authorities declared him a foreigner who had 'disgracefully abused' the benefits of hospitality which were therefore revoked and he was expelled at 24 hours' notice, together with his colleagues Dronke and Weerth-also not Prussian citizens—while Freiligrath and Wilhelm Wolff—who were faced legal action. On that date, 19 May 1849, the last number of the News Rheinische Zeitung came out, printed in red.

For the rest of the month Marx and Engels travelled about southern and western Germany, then in a state of insurrection, visiting Frankfurt, Baden, the Palatinate and, finally, Marx went to Bingen where he met his wife with Helene Demuth and the children on their way to Trier. Mrs Marx now made a detour to Frankfurt to pawn yet again the silver she had just redeemed from Brussels, in which transaction she was helped by Joseph Weydemeyer—at that time the leader of the Frankfurt circle of the League of Communists—who, with his wife Luise, gave the little travelling party hospitality. She then went on her way to remain with her mother until July.

In the first days of July, after Engels had joined the Baden-Palatinate insurgent army, fighting in a number of engagements until it was forced into retreat at Ratstatt, Marx reached Paris, using the name of Ramboz for his correspondence. He was not allowed to remain in peace for long. On 19 July, less than a fortnight after the family had been re-united and when they had just found what Mrs Marx described as 'pretty, convenient lodgings in a healthy neighbourhood' (at 45 rue de Lille, the same street in the faubourg St. Germain where Engels had lived in 1846) where, although it was rather expensive, they planned to stay for a while, the Minister of the Interior, Dufaure, banished Marx from Paris to what he,

Marx, believed to be the particularly unhealthy department of Morbihan. (A contemporary atlas speaks of its climate as 'donx et uniforme'.) He strongly objected and appealed against this order but a month later he was informed that it must be obeyed, without delay.

That was on 16 August 1849. Thereupon he realized, as Engels had predicted four years earlier, that England was the only place left for him. Eight days later he embarked with Ferdinand Wolff from Boulogne.

The Poverty of Philosophers

Upon his arrival in London Marx stayed with Karl Blind, a refugee journalist, who lodged at—or perhaps used only as an accommodation address—Peterson's Coffeehouse in Robert Street, near Grosvenor Square. Almost at once Marx went down with a most inconvenient if mild illness, known as cholerine, which prevented him from househunting for his family or preparing for their reception. Mrs Marx, after severe difficulties and harassment by the police, had been permitted to stay in Paris until 15 September, by which time she was almost eight months pregnant again, ill and exhausted.

When she reached London, penniless, with Lenchen and the three children, she was met by her husband's colleague, George Weerth, who found temporary shelter for them all in a small Leicester Square boarding house. With the birth of the fourth child imminent it was clear that more suitable quarters were a necessity and, at the end of a week, Marx having recovered, they moved into what they hoped would be a fairly permanent home in semi-furnished lodgings at 4 Anderson Street, a little turning off the King's Road in Chelsea.

Here, on 5 November, was born a second son, named Henry Edward Guy and known as Guido, or Foxchen. As a friend wrote to Weydemeyer: 'The young Communist who has put in an appearance at the Marxes is called Henry Edward Guy Fawkes. He was born on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot... So far the little fellow bores everyone with his screaming; however, in time no doubt he will listen to reason.'

It is hardly surprising that, the fourth child in five-and-a-half years arriving so soon after the mother's stressful flight to an entirely unknown country in an ailing and anxious condition, he should have been sickly and difficult to rear. Although she knew it to be inadvisable Mrs Marx insisted upon breast-feeding the infant—indeed, she saw no alternative since wet-nurses in London were far beyond her means—and, with sore and bleeding nipples, she suffered torments; while the baby, she said, not only drank in her suppressed anxieties with her milk but 'in his pain sucked so hard... that blood often poured into his little quivering mouth'. With this start in life, he made but poor progress. 'Since he came into the world he has not had a single night's sleep, at best two or three hours. Recently, too, he has had violent convulsions and has perpetually hung between pitiful life and death...'

When the rent—of about £2 a week—had been paid for some five months

to the resident caretaker, herself under notice to quit, it was agreed that the landlord should be paid direct in future. But he was not; and one cold, wet spring morning when the rent had fallen into arrears, while the mother was engaged in trying to feed the unhappy Guido, the caretaker charged into the room, denied the agreement, claimed that she was owed £3 and demanded payment on the spot. The money was simply not there; whereupon bailiffs were sent for and distrained all the family's sparse possessions: 'beds, linen, undercloths, dresses, everything [wrote Mrs Marx], down to the very cradle of my poor baby and the best toys of the girls who stood there shedding tears.' The men threatened to come back in two hours' time to take the things away. I should then have had to lie on the bare boards with my trembling children and streaming breasts.'

In this emergency a friend offered to go for help and took a cab whose horse bolted so that he jumped out, in fear of his life, and was brought back to the house, badly injured. Meanwhile, since it was plain that they would have to leave Anderson Street the next day, Marx was wildly seeking other quarters, only to find that nobody was willing to take the family in once the four children were mentioned. At last another friend, better endowed than most, gave them the necessary £5, while Mrs Marx in all haste sold the beds to pay off the chemist, the baker, the butcher and the milkman who, alerted by the news of bailiffs on the premises, now besieged the place, brandishing unpaid bills. Mrs Marx continued the tale:

The beds that had been sold were taken out and loaded on to a cart—and what happened? It was well after sunset, which contravenes English law; the landlord turned up and forced his way in with two police constables, alleging that among the things sold there could be some of his property and that we planned to flee abroad. In less than five minutes there were more than two or three hundred people at our door: the whole Chelsea rabble. The beds were unloaded and brought back in: only next morning, after sunrise, could they be handed over to the buyers. As we were now, thanks to the sale of all our belongings, able to settle everything down to the last farthing, I moved with my children into two small rooms in the German Hotel at 1 Leicester Street, Leicester Square, where, for £5.10 a week, we were humanely welcomed.

The human welcome did not last long: at the end of a week 'our worthy host refused to serve us breakfast and we were obliged to look for other lodgings'. These they found nearby, at 64 Dean Street in Soho where they stayed for six wretched months. 'We live, all six of us, in one small room and a very small closet, for which we pay more than for the largest house in Germany; and pay weekly into the bargain,' wrote Mrs Marx to Weydemeyer that summer. It was of this time that she also told him:

... my husband is almost overwhelmed by the pettiest domestic worries of so hideous a nature that it has taken all his energy, all his calm, sane, quiet fortitude to sustain him in this daily, hourly struggle... Never, even in the most dreadful moments, did he lose his confidence in the future, nor yet his good humour, being perfectly content if he saw me happy with our beloved children snuggling close to their mama...

In August, now pregnant with her fifth child, Mrs Marx made the desperate move of going to Zaltbommel in Holland to beg help from Lion Philips, a businessman married to Marx's maternal aunt, Sophia. Still suffering from the effects of the recent upheavals in Europe, Philips was in no mood to sympathise with needy revolutionaries, albeit his kin. He refused to give any financial aid though, on parting, he pressed into Mrs Marx's hand a small tip for her youngest child, which she charitably interpreted as regret that he was not able to do more. With despair in my heart [she wrote], I turned back home. Little Edgar, with his friendly face, came bounding towards me and my Föxchen held out his tiny arms to me.'

At the end of October Marx entreated Weydemeyer to borrow enough cash from somewhere or other to redeem the silver so recently pawned by his wife in Frankfurt, to sell it to a jeweller or anyone else who would buy it, repay the loan and send him the surplus. 'The lender [he said], runs no risk, because if you can't sell the things at a profit you have only to take them back to the pawnbroker. On the other hand, my situation is now such that I absolutely must raise some money if only to be able to go on working. He asked Weydemeyer to make an exception and to leave in pawn Jenny's little silver mug, plate, knife and fork: 'which in any case have no selling value.'

The 'Mystère' and Two Tragedies

One cannot but be awed by the reflection that, in this period of domestic tribulations in England, what Marx wrote was Class Struggles in France, 1848–1850. It was in these circumstances, with this work completed, that, a month later, on 19 November, the little Guido having contracted a lung infection, died, barely more than a year old. Marx wrote to Engels on the same day:

Just a couple of lines. This morning at 10 o'clock our little gunpowder plotter Föxchen died. Suddenly, in one of the convulsions he so frequently had. A few minutes before he was still laughing and playful. It was totally unexpected. You can imagine the state of things here. Owing to your absence³ we happen to be very isolated just now... Should you be in the mood, drop a few lines to my wife. She is quite beside herself.

Engels immediately complied and Marx wrote to him a few days later:

Your letter did my wife good. She is in a really dangerously nervous and exhausted condition. She had suckled the child herself and paid for his life in the most difficult circumstances at the cost of the utmost sacrifice. Added to that is the thought that the poor child was the victim of domestic poverty, although he did not want for care in any particular...

³ Engels had just left London to work in the office of his father's cotton mill in Manchester.

At the beginning of December Mrs Marx answered Engels's letter, saying how deeply she appreciated his sympathy in the loss of 'our darling, my poor little child of sorrows'. Later she was to write: 'My woe was great. He was the first child I had lost.' Looking back over the years she added: 'I had no inkling then of the greater woe in store for me beside which all else paled into insignificance.'

Before the turn of the year, but a few weeks after Guido's death, the family moved again, this time into rooms at 28 Dean Street, a little further north on the same side of the road, where they were to remain for close on six years. Here another daughter was born on 28 March 1851. She was named Jenny Eveline Frances and known as Franziska. This year and the following one were later pronounced by Mrs Marx to have been 'the years of the greatest and, at the same time, the most paltry troubles, worries, disappointments and privations of all kinds.'

Nevertheless, the new baby was put out to nurse because, not only were living conditions already overcrowded, but Mrs Marx ever since the birth—an easy one—had been ill, 'owing to domestic rather than physical causes', as Marx wrote to Engels at the end of March. There was literally not a farthing in the house, he said, but a pile of bills from the small local shopkeepers.

Three months after Franziska's arrival, on 23 June, Helene Demuth gave birth to Marx's illegitimate son, named Henry Frederick and usually called Freddy. He was nurtured by foster parents. This episode is not at all well documented. In her reminiscences Mrs Marx alludes to it obliquely—'In the early summer of 1851 an event occurred which I do not wish to touch upon more closely but which greatly increased our domestic and external troubles'—while Marx in letters to Engels refers to a 'mystère'—'in which you too play a part'—but is at pains to put nothing explicit on paper, intent, rather, on arranging a personal meeting: '... about the mystère I shall not write because, come what may, I shall without fail come to see you...' Marx indeed spent a few days in Manchester towards the end of April and Engels came to London for the first fortnight in June. Engels's part was to assume, until he lay on his deathbed, the fictitious paternity of Freddy Demuth.

In August of that year 1851 Charles Dana, the editor of the New York Daily Tribana, invited Marx and Freiligrath to become paid contributors to his paper. This should have made for a more promising future, but family misfortune struck again. At Easter, 11 April 1852, the baby Franziska not yet 13 months old, developed bronchitis and on the 14th she died. Hard as it must have been throughout that past year to keep four small children, their parents and servant alive and well in those cramped surroundings, this situation had a special poignancy. Franziska's 'lifeless little body rested in the small back room [wrote Mrs Marx], while we all moved into the front room and, when night fell, we lay down on the floor, the three living children beside us, and we wept for the little

⁴ For the little that is known about Freddy Demuth (1851-1929) see Yvonne Kapp, Eleanor Marx, Vol. I, pp. 259-297 and Vol. II, pp. 435-439, 535-536 and 597

creature who lay cold and pallid in the next room. Our dear child's death occurred at a time of the harshest privations...'

With anguished feelings, everyone else's promises having failed, she approached a French refugee of their acquaintance who lived in the neighbourhood and openly appealed for help in their distress. He gave her £2, which paid for the child's coffin. 'She had no crib when she came into the world [wrote the mother], and for long was also denied a last little vessel in which to be laid. It went hard for us when we saw it carried out to its last resting-place...' After the tragic loss of these two babies, the parents clung even more closely to the three who remained to them.

'My Dear Devil ...'

Before he came to England, probably in Germany, a drawing of Edgar was made, the only portrait known to exist. He was not yet three and, though admittedly no Adonis, the young child's face is shown as full of character with large, intelligent dark eyes, a prominent nose, lofty forehead and shapely mouth. He appears to have an abnormally large head, but whether this was a sign of ill-health, of heredity—Marx's head was exceedingly large for his height—or the artist's incompetence, is open to question. To be sure, Wilhelm Liebknecht, writing some forty years after Edgar's death, spoke of this 'very gifted' little boy whose 'promising head' seemed too heavy for his weak body and claimed that he had been ailing since birth; but there is no contemporary evidence to support this.

Not only Edgar but also Jenny and Laura must have had a fairly sound constitution to withstand the vicissitudes of their tenderest years. Before the eldest child had much passed her fifth birthday the family had lived, under less than favourable conditions, in four different countries, while during their first eighteen months in England they had moved from one unsatisfactory lodging to another no less than six times. Yet in May 1850, at the depth of their miseries, Mrs Marx could write: 'Our three eldest children are doing splendidly despite everything. The girls are pretty, healthy, sunny, good little creatures and our stout little boy is full of fun and the most amusing notions . . .'

At that age—three-and-a-half—he was said to be fond of singing revolutionary songs, in German, at the top of his voice until the whole house shook. His merry disposition gave rise to ingenious stratagems, admiringly recounted by his mother. When he was five Mrs Marx told Engels: 'You may remember that Pieper gave the lad his nice value as a present. Yesterday he threatened to take it back and buy him something else instead. This morning the boy hid the value and said "Mohr, I've hidden it so well that if Pieper wants it I shall say I've given it to a poor man." The slyboots!'

A year later his mother was reporting how Edgar had outwitted the baker

⁵ Wilhelm Pieper, then aged 24, a philologist and journalist, who was a member of the Communist League, emigrated to London in 1850 where he acted briefly as Marx's secretary—until Mrs Marx took over that function—and the constant butt of the children. ⁶ The children commonly called Marx by his nickname. Mohr, or Moor.

who, refusing further credit or supplies until he was paid, called at the house asking for Mr Marx, to which the six-year-old at the door replied 'No, he ain't upstairs', snatched three loaves and darted away in triumph. Though in the habit of composing three letters a day to 'Frederick in Manchester', conscientiously sticking used stamps on them, one of his few known contributions to Marxist writings is a letter he left on his father's desk in March 1854 which read:

My dear Devil, I hope you are quite well because I am coming to see you and I forgot to tell you that lupus went out to drink as he generally does and got quite drunk and as he was going a long the streets there came some thieves and stole him his watch and his spectacles and five pounds and his Palleto and beat him dreadfully and garotted him. I am your friend Muchla-brassel.

It may be remarked that, although Musch had now been in England for four-and-a-half years, his first language was French, while he must certainly have heard more German than English in the home to which all the Marxes' refugee friends regularly flocked. Marx himself, it is known, despite his exceptional facility with languages, did not take too readily to English. All his work during those first years in London was written in German. Following Louis Napoleon's conp d'état of December 18518 until March 1852 he wrote The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, published in the German language paper Die Revolution by Weydemeyer, who had now emigrated in America; though Revolution and Counter-Revolution—with other articles for the New York Daily Tribune bearing Marx's name—was in fact Engels' work.

This has been generally known since 1913, but not, of course, by Eleanor Marx when she edited a volume of those articles for English publication in 1896, with a preface describing life in the two rooms at 28 Dean Street where, she believed, her father had written them before she was born. I have heard tell [she wrote], how the children would pile up chairs behind him to represent a coach, to which he was harnessed as a horse, and would 'whip him up' even as he sat at his desk writing . . . It may interest readers to know what Marx was paid for his articles . . . He received £1 for each contribution'

It was this commission that enabled the Marxes to count upon a regular if minimum income so that, as his wife put it, they were 'relieved from daily nagging wornes', after two years of 'the greatest hardship, of continual acute anxiety, great privations of all kinds and actual need'.

In September 1850 the executive authority of the Communist League had transferred from London to Cologne, but in May 1851 its leaders were arrested and, after some 18 months in gaol, eleven of them were brought to a trial that lasted from 4 October to 12 November 1852. Despite the perjured evidence produced in court against them, four were acquitted.

⁷ Wilhelm Wolff.

⁸ By which his presidency was prolonged for 10 years. A year later he proclaimed himself Emperor

The other seven were sentenced to imprisonment varying from three to six years.

This led to an interruption of Marx's paid work as he set about writing his Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologns while that trial was still in progress. It was while Marx was engaged on this task and, possibly, to get the children out of the 'office', that Wilhelm Liebknecht—a young emigrant of 24 who had met the Marxes at a picnic arranged by the German Workers' Educational Society in the summer of 1850, to become thereafter one of their most constant visitors—took the two small girls, Jenny and Laura, to watch Wellington's state funeral on 15 November 1852 and almost lost them in the crowd near Temple Bar.

Marx at Play

From his close observation of family life both at 64 and 28 Dean Street—and, after 1856, in the little house at Kentish Town—Liebknecht wrote that, for Marx, 'the society of children was a necessity, whereby he was refreshed and renewed'. Indeed, every one of those contemporaries, friends and relations and colleagues, who later set down their recollections of Marx testified that he was at his best with children. This might be said of many people who could not in fact be bothered with them for more than five minutes at a time but, as one of his own daughters wrote, Marx was their most delightful and tireless playfellow. He stole time from his desk to sail paper boats on tubs of water, staging naval battles that ended in the burning of the flotillas; he read aloud to them; he told them, in instalments, stories of his own invention; and, when they went to Hampstead Heath, he organised wild games, as when, with one child upon his shoulders and another upon Liebknecht's, he mounted daring cavalry charges and steeplechases. He never wearied of their companionship; nor did this trait ever desert him. His grandson, Edgar Longuet, wrote that he would play with him and his brothers 'as though a child himself without any fear of compromising his dignity'. When he was a tired, sick old man, recently widowed, for whom, it was thought, the household containing his four little grandsons would be altogether too boisterous, he wrote that, on the contrary, he hoped to spend many a good day with them to 'fulfil worthily my duties as a grandfather' and that the peace and quiet he needed was that of family life with 'the microscopic world of children's noises'.

In March 1853, at the time when the Crimean War broke out, Marx was visited by a Prussian police spy who gave his masters a detailed and unexpectedly genial account of the impoverished *minage* in Dean Street and the 'three really handsome children' whose sticky playthings occupied the only chair with four whole legs in that cluttered living space which was courteously offered to the guest.

Marx's sister Louise, three years his junior, was married that year in June to Jan Juta, a Dutch businessman who wished to open a bookshop in Cape Town. Before sailing to South Africa the bridal pair spent a few pleasant days in London with the Marxes. It was a relatively easeful time.

Founded in London in 1840 by members of the League of the Just.

'The children flourished [wrote Mrs Marx] and developed both physically and mentally, although we were still in our poky little dwelling.' All that summer Lenchen took the children to one or other of the parks where they romped in the fresh air and everyone enjoyed the plentiful cherries, strawberries and grapes of that season.

The regular payments from America enabled them to settle old debts and live free from money troubles. Marx wrote some of his most important articles at this time, including those penned between October and December against Lord Palmerston, 'responsible for the whole foreign policy England has pursued from the revolution of 1830 to December 1851... the most infamous and reactionary epoch of English history....'

As the year drew to a close there was a brief spell of pure happiness. Christmas was, as Mrs Marx wrote, 'the first joyful festivity we had in London'; and, many years after, Jenny wrote to Laura recalling the occasion:

Do you remember the jolly evening in Dean Street? I picture, as though it were yesterday, the way you, Edgar and I listened impatiently for the bell to summon us into the room where the Christmas tree stood. When at long last the awaited peal rang out, we were almost frightened, because we hadn't been allowed into that mysterious living room for a whole week. You two hung back timidly, while I, I suppose to hide my own misgivings, rushed forward as impetuously as I could. How glorious the living room seemed to us, how elegant and novel the dusty old furniture looked . . .

Ernst Dronke had come the night before to decorate the tree and other friends lavished splendid toys upon the children: dolls, guns, cooking utensils, drums and trumpets.

No sooner was the New Year ushered in than coming events cast their shadow before: Edgar showed the first symptoms of the illness that was to destroy him. At the beginning of January the whole family went down with influenza from which Mrs Marx and the girls quickly recovered, while Edgar did not. He was laid up for a long time; and so, too, was Marx, who begged Engels to write an article in his stead for the New York Daily Tribune as he was now three contributions in arrears. By the early spring Edgar was well enough to go to school with his sisters and when, towards the end of May, all three children picked up measles, it was their mother, newly pregnant once more, who suffered most. She was utterly worn out—which Marx attributed to her strenuous duties as day and night nurse—but refused to see the doctor on the pretext that the medicine he has prescribed for her condition on a former occasion had only made her worse.

By the middle of June, while the children went back to school, she took to her bed and now Marx insisted upon a doctor, with the result that she went with Lenchen and the children to stay for a couple of weeks at a friend's house in Edmonton, then a rural Middlesex village. 'The country air may restore her enough to enable her to go to Trier,' Marx told Engels

and, on 8 July, obeying the physician, Mrs Marx set off alone to stay with her mother and take a complete rest.

The Death of Musch

Ever since her last visit to Trier in 1849 Mrs Marx had found the narrow provincial life there, with its gossip and petty local interests, oppressive, as she had written to her friend Lina Schoeler. Added to which her mother, to whom she had always been much attached, had greatly changed. The effects of this 'twaddling mean society', her relative isolation and advancing age—she was now in her sixties—had induced in an erstwhile mild and benevolent character a new harshness and an egotism that wounded her daughter. Daily life with the old lady had given rise to endless small brushes and Mrs Marx declared that she never breathed freely in that atmosphere. However, on this visit, she recuperated her health and returned to London on 10 August in a tranquil state of mind to await the birth of her last child, named Jenny Julia Eleanor, on 6 January 1855. (Another child, of sex unknown, was born to live but a few hours in July 1857.)

The baby—whose sex was a disappointment to Marx—though always yelling, was healthy enough and no more than a vexation; but on 3 March Marx wrote to Engels enumerating the family's several afflictions of which the first, and by far the worst, was Edgar's persistent gastric fever. He added: . . . the doctor says I need a change of air as I haven't left the precincts of Soho Square for two years. So I should like to visit Manchester before my wife goes to Trier again . . . At all events, I must—naturally not until everything here is in order—just for once and for a short spell get away from here, because the physical stuffiness is also stultifying my brain'

Thereafter came a series of letters to Engels.

- [8 March] I can't leave here until Colonel Musch is visibly restored. All the same, he has made rapid strides towards recovery this week, the doctor was exceedingly pleased today and perhaps everything will be all right next week. As soon as I can leave with a clear conscience I shall write. Next week, I think...
- [16 March] I don't believe the good Musch will pull through his illness. You will understand the effect this prospect has here at home. My wife is completely down again. However, the matter must now be decided soon, one way or another...
- [27 March] in the last few days Musch has noticeably improved and the doctor expressed the highest hopes. If all goes well Musch must go into the country at once. Of course he is terribly weak and emaciated. The fever is got rid of and the constipation much relieved. The main question now is only whether his constitution is strong enough to stand the whole treatment. However, I believe it is. As soon as the doctor says that there is no longer any danger, I shall come to you . . . I am dog-tired as a result of my long night vigils as Musch's nurse . . .

[30 March] I postponed sending you a daily health bulletin because the illness fluctuated so much that my own opinion changed almost hourly. But finally the disease has taken on the character of the mesenteric tuberculosis hereditary in my family 10 and even on the medical side, hope seems to be abandoned. For the past week my wife has been more unwell than ever before with mental anxiety. My own heart bleeds and my head is on fire, although naturally I have to keep my countenance. Not for an instant during his illness has the child belied his original, good-humoured and at the same time self-reliant character. I cannot thank you enough for the friendship with which you work in my stead and for the concern you show for the child. Should there be a turn for the better, I shall write to you at once.

[6 April, Good Friday] Poor Musch is no more. He closed his eyes (in the literal sense) in my arms today between 5 and 6 o'clock. I shall never forget how your friendship in this terrible time comforted us. You will understand my anguish about the child. My wife sends you the friendliest greetings. Possibly I shall bring her with me for a week when I come to Manchester. In any case I must find some way of getting her over the first days.

Liebknecht came at once to offer his sympathy.

I shall never forget the scene [he wrote]. The mother, bowed over the dead child, weeping silently, Lenchen standing by and sobbing, and Marx, in fearful agitation, rejecting vehemently, almost angrily, every attempt to console him, the two girls crying quietly, pressed close to their mother who, in her agony, clutched them to her convulsively, as though to clamp them to herself, to defend them against death which had robbed her of her boy . . .

Two days later Musch was buried in the graveyard of Whitefield Tabernacle.¹¹ Half a dozen of the Marxes' refugee friends attended the funeral, Liebknecht riding in the carriage with Marx, who

sat speechless, his head buried in his hands. I stroked his forehead: 'Mohr, you have your wife, your children and us, we who are all so fond of you'—'You can't give me back the boy,' he groaned and without a word we drove to the church-yard... As the coffin was about to be lowered into the grave, Marx became so agitated that I went and stood next to him, afraid that he would leap into the grave...

¹⁰ Marx's father, two of his sisters and two of his brothers died of tuberculosis. Marx himself, at the age of 20, had suspected lung disease and three years later was declared unfit for military service on those grounds.

¹¹ Where also Guido and Franxiska were thought to have been buried. Built in 1756 by Matthew Pearce for George Whitefield, one of the founders of Methodism, the chapel, or Tabernacle, was rebuilt in 1899. The present structure is the third on the site in Tottenham Court Road. The graveyard became the scene of disorderly behaviour and was closed in the mid-1890s. In 1898 most of the coffins were disinterred and reburied in Chingford Mount cemetery.

On 12 April Marx wrote to Engels:

The house is naturally quite desolate and forlorn since the death of the dear child who was its life and soul. The way we miss him at every turn is quite indescribable. I've been through all kinds of misfortune in my time, but it's only now that I know what real unhappiness is. I feel myself broken down. It's a good thing that since the day of the burial I've had such furious headaches that I can't think or see or hear. In all the terrible agonies I've experienced these days, the thought of you and your friendship has always sustained me, and the hope that, together, we may still do something sensible in the world.

Marx and his wife went to Manchester a few days later for three weeks; but on their return to London he reported that she was in extremely bad health and shortly she collapsed. 'The whole household is still very stricken,' he wrote. The weeks passed, but the burden of grief was not lifted. On 3 July Marx said: '... we are still a sorrowful household here. My wife is still very unwell. The memory of the poor beloved child torments us and even obtrudes upon his sisters' play. One can get over such blows only slowly and with the passage of time. For me the loss is still as fresh as on the first day, so I can share my wife's sufferings...'

Time coursed slowly indeed for Mrs Marx. In September, writing to condole with a newly-widowed friend, Marx wrote: '... the news of this fresh bereavement has so vividly reawakened in my wife the memory of our only little son that her state of mind prevents her from writing to you just now. She weeps and wails like a child...'

More than a year later, when Mrs Marx was once again in Trier with the children at the time of her mother's death and when Marx was stopping with Engels in Manchester, he wrote her—after thirteen years of married life—what can only be described as a love-letter in which he said: '... Where would I ever find a face whose every feature, yes, every wrinkle, revives the greatest and sweetest memories of my life. Even my everlasting pain, my unappeasable sense of loss, I read in your sweet countenance, and I kiss away the pain when I kiss your lovely face...'

Not until the end of 1857 could Mrs Marx say that her husband's former capacity for work and his facility were regained, as were his intellectual vigour and serenity of spirit, 'destroyed for years, ever since his great grief, the loss of our beloved darling for whom my heart will always mourn.'

Certainly the heartbroken family took comfort from the little Eleanor.

The child was just born [wrote her mother], when my poor beloved Edgar went from us and all the love for the little brother, all the tenderness for him, were now transferred to the little sister whom the older girls looked after and cared for with almost maternal solicitude. Still, there can hardly be a more lovable child, as pretty as a picture with an artless and lively sense of fun... The child is Karl's real pet and laughs and chatters many of his cares away...'

Nevertheless, Edgar's sweet young boyhood remained always in mind and his death an abiding sorrow. Eleven years after, when Ferdinand Cohen, Karl Blind's stepson, a student of 24, made an attempt on Bismarck's life, was arrested and committed suicide in gaol, Marx wrote: 'He was a very nice (if not particularly gifted) boy for whom I feel a special sympathy because he was an old friend of Musch...'

Sons and Daughters

There can be no question but that Marx would have preferred to father sons rather than daughters. No better proof exists than his openly expressed dismay at the birth of Franziska in 1851—'my wife has unfortunately been delivered of a girl, not a boy'—and of Eleanor in 1855—'had it been a male the event would have been more acceptable'. Even in later life, hard-driven by poverty and the outlay which he thought necessary for the upbringing of young girls, he deplored the fact that they were not young men. Yet it is doubtful whether over the years, with his constant and unconditional affection for his children, he would have relished their company and cherished their concerns as dearly, or as intimately, had they been sons and not daughters.

Eleanor, the youngest, was perhaps the most fortunate of all the six children born to the family. Arriving in January 1855, three months before the death of Edgar, she was never forced to leave her native country nor to live the 'vagabond life' of her mother and sisters. The two elder girls, dark-eyed Jenny and blond Laura—separated in years by almost a decade from the youngest by the deaths of the three other children—grew up to marry from that house, while Eleanor remained with her parents until their death in their last home, barely a stone's throw away, then known as 9 Maitland Park Crescent, to which they went in 1875. There, nursed in her last illness by Eleanor and Helene Demuth, Mrs Marx died on 2 December 1881. Two years later, on 11 January 1883, it was Jenny in France who passed away at the age of 38, a few months after giving birth to her sixth child and only daughter, the shock of which bereavement hastened Marx's own end on 14 March.

To those who knew Karl Marx, [wrote Eleanor], no legend is funnier than the common one which pictures him a morose, bitter, unbending, unapproachable man... This picture of the cheeriest, gayest soul that ever breathed, of a man brimming over with humour and good humour, whose hearty laugh was infectious and irresistible, of the kindliest, gentlest, most sympathetic of companions, is a standing wonder—and amusement—to those who knew him...

Jenny's photograph, together with that of his wife and his father, was found in Marx's breast-pocket when he died. Engels laid them in his coffin.

review

The Hurricane That Shook the Caribbean

Winston James

In the wake of the Depression, a series of labour rebellions ripped through the British Caribbean archipelago like a powerful hurricane. Starting in St. Kitts in 1935, unrest and strikes rapidly moved southeasterly to St. Vincent, St. Lucia and Guyana. After a year of relative calm, the cycle of struggle recommenced as the virtually starving workers, peasants and unemployed rose up once again, in 1937, in St. Lucia, Barbados, Trinidad and Guyana. The final 'disturbance' was also the most violent and threatening to British colonialism: the Jamaican 'Labour Rebellion' of 1938. British authority was only fully restored after scores of people were killed, hundreds wounded (on both sides) and thousands arrested.

Although these movements of the downtrodden were militarily suppressed, they produced a profound political aftermath, especially in Jamaica. First of all, they were the founding moment of the modern labour movement in the English-speaking Caribbean: trade unions were brought into being in a serious way for the first time with legal rights for organization and action. Secondly, the unrest opened the road to universal adult suffrage and securely planted the seeds of future self-government and, eventually, independence. However, it is also clear—at least with the benefit of hindsight—that the exploited and oppressed in their historic resistance to colonialism also unwittingly served as the battering ram of the indigenous and relatively weak bourgeois and petty bourgeoise classes, who have subsequently become the neo-colonial ruling class.

This exploitation of working-class militancy by local elites is a central theme of Ken Post's massive study of Jamaica from the 1938 Rebellion through the Second World War. Arise Ye Starvelings and Strike the Iron are the fruits of the ambitious and longterm study of modern Jamaica which Post began in 1967. Painstakingly devoting over a thousand pages to just eight years of Jamaican history, with at least one more volume to follow, Post's project must surely be ranked as one of the most remarkable Marxist analyses of a concrete social formation ever attempted. At the same time Post has filled, and most impressively, a gaping hole in Jamaican and West Indian historiography. Despite the fact that the uprisings of the late 1930s were a watershed in the history of the English-speaking Caribbean only second in importance to the abolition of slavery in 1834, no one, astonishingly, has hitherto analysed these

¹ Arus Ye Starrelings: The Jamescan Labour Robellion of 1938 and Its Aftermath, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1978, 502 pp (hereafter Ars), Strike the Iron: A Colony at War—Jamesca, 1939–1945, two volumes, New Jersey, Humanities Press in association with The Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 1981, 567 pp. (hereafter 571)

events in any detail either on a pan-Caribbean or on a national level. The conspicuous paucity of any serious analysis of these events is epitomized by the fact that until Post began to publish his preliminary findings in 1969, the most important study was the slim pamphlet 'Labour in the West Indies: The Birth of a Workers' Movement', written by the young W. Arthur Lewis (now, not insignificantly, Sir Arthur Lewis) for the Fabian Society in 1939.

Although Post's work is above all a tour de force of research in detail, with an exacting attention to the quotidian condition of the Jamaican labouring classes, its theoretical orientation is not without interest. First, there is an important general implication in his explicit decision to study the dynamics and consequences of a popular defeat. Since 'socialist revolutions are rare phenomena', Post enjoins that Marxism 'must explain not only why there are revolutions, but why there are not, in situations where at first glance they might be expected. Although this imperative may seem obvious, it has seldom been followed—to the detriment of revolutionary strategy which has as much, if not more, to learn from failure as from victory. Thus the rich tradition of critical reflection on the Russian Revolution from Trotsky to Carr may be contrasted to the dearth of analyses of the defeats of the German and Hungarian Revolutions. Or, more to the immediate point, Cuba since 1959 has elicited enormous interest on the left, but who has studied the lessons of the failed attempts at radical transformation in Venezuela and the Dominican Republic? At present we know far more about the success of the Grenadian Revolution of 1979 than we do about the failure of the Trinidadian insurrection of 1970. It should be evident, therefore, to the committed reader that Post's meticulous concern with the events of 1938-45 arises out of more than the ordinary professional interest to repair the gap in the historical record: these volumes are impassioned by a desire to grasp the most difficult problems of popular organization and ideology as expressed in the dialectics of defeat and cooptation.

Secondly, Post is unabashedly occumenical in his search for useful paradigms that might illuminate one or another aspect of Jamaican society—the theoretical contributions of Lukacs, Gramsci, Mao, Coletti, Anderson, Thompson, Poulantzas and Rey all ment respectful citation. Indeed the two chapters on theory in the first volume can be read in their own right with some fascination. But what is particularly unusual, and certainly unorthodox, is Post's audacious syncretism of Trotsky and Althusser. The History of the Russian Revolution is an evident inspiration, and in his best passages Post obtains tremendous effect from enlivening structuralist Marxism with a narrative style that evokes Trotsky's. As Aidan Foster-Carter noted several years ago, '... for once, the dry and dusty Althusserian bones get up and dance in a veritable zombie

4 ATS, p. 1

² 'The Politics of Protest in Jamaica 1938, Some Problems of Analysis and Conceptualization', Social and Economic Studies, 18, 4 (December 1969). Post also published around the same time a seminal essay on the early Rastafarian movement: 'The Bible as Ideology' Ethiopianism in Jamaica, 1930–38' in C. H. Allen and R. W. Johnson (eds.), African Perspectives, London 1970.

³ This was republished by New Beacon Books (London 1977) with an important 'Afterword' by Susan Craig tracing, *inter alia*, the political evolution of Arthur Lewis

jamboree. Amazingly, Post's Jamaica contains people as well as modes of production...'5

Post's People

And the people in Post's history resist both oppression and anonymity with a particularly stubborn courage and humour. Thus during fierce conflict in St. Mary parish, one Edgar Daley, on being admonished by the police to give up his stick, refused in no uncertain terms: 'No, not a rass. You have your gun. I have my stick.' When Daley threw a policeman to the ground he was bayoneted and his back was broken by rifle butts. His fellow 'sufferers' retaliated by stoning the police, who opened fire, killing four people. Arise Ye Starvelings is dedicated to the memory of Daley and the twelve others—including four women—who died at the hands of the colonial state during the uprising of 1938.

Post unravels in a very diligent manner the way in which this movement, so defiantly protean, was eventually appropriated by Alexander Bustamante, and why the Peoples' National Party (PNP), led by Bustamante's Oxford-educated cousin, Norman Manley, did not succeed in leading the masses. Bustamante, in contrast to the aloof Manley, was an astute and demogogic orator who, by means of his fiery rhetoric appealed to the 'racial consciousness' (which in the Jamaica of 1938 was virtually synonymous with 'class consciousness' since race and class overlapped to such a great extent) of the exploited and oppressed. Although virtually white in ethnic origin and not above private racist remarks, 'Busta' was seen by many desperate workers and peasants as the downtrodden but cunning spider of Afro-Jamaican mythology: Anancy, who could out-manoeuvre the rich and mighty by his sheer superior intelligence. But Bustamante, a former moneylender of questionable integrity, used his cunning against the masses; as Post argues in a compelling portrait of the 'Chief', he was the consummate 'trickster politician'.

The fervent faith of the masses in Bustamante—who had no intention of challenging colonialism, let alone capitalism—contributed to the relative failure of the 1938 uprising. At best, 'Labour Leader No. 1' addressed some of the demands which arose out of the 'trade-union consciousness' of the workers: higher wages, better working conditions, and so on. But, as Post shows, there were other factors at work which accounted for the outcome of the rebellion in addition to misleadership: insufficient organization on the part of the insurgents and the vulnerability of the alliance with the peasants, who succumbed to the colonial regime's false promise of an agrarian 'New Deal'. Thus in the end, 'though extreme in form, the rebellion was never more than an instance of labour politics, and the Age of Cant was by no means over.' Nevertheless it is also true that 'after the middle of 1938 Jamaica was never quite the same again.'

⁵ Aidan Foster-Carter, 'The Modes of Production Controversy', NLR 107 (January/February 1978), p. 68.

⁶ ATS, p 283 For those unfamiliar with Jamaican the language, Post explains in a note that "Rass" is a very vulgar expression known in contemporary Jamaica as a "five pound word" from the fine popularly believed to be exacted for its public use." (p 303)

⁷ ATS, pp 299 and 300

The two volumes of Striks the Iron continue the narrative through the War years, systematically examining 'the evolution of British policy towards Jamaica under the pressure of war; the penetration by the United States capitalism under the cover of wartime conditions; the development of the labour movement in the colony, with special reference to the role of its avowed Communists; the continuing importance of Black Nationalism as a theme of resistance to colonial capitalism; and the role of critics of that phenomena in the United Kingdom itself'. A daunting mass of evidence—mined from research in Kingston, Oxford, London, and Washington D.C. (including the intelligence reports prepared by FBI agents operating in Jamaica)—is synthesized as coherently as the well-prepared brief of a brilliant barrister. Aiming to reconstruct the 'intricacy of what really happened', Post is particularly successful in situating Jamaican events, and their repercussions, within the conflictual context of the wartime alliance between Britain and the United States.

The United States stealthily and relentlessly enhanced its position in Jamaica at the expense of a battered and waning Britain: first taking military base for lendlesse, then acquiring control over the island's newly discovered bauxite resources. The geniatric and virtually toothless Lion stalled, manoeuvred and played for time; but, by the end of the War, Britain had effectively surrendered the resources of the Jamaican people to the United States. Striks the Iron reveals, for the first time, the secret wheeling-and-dealing which forms the 'prehistory' of the bauxite-alumina industry in Jamaica.

Origins of Political Violence in Jamaica

These latest volumes also contain crucial material on the origins of the inter-communal violence and political terrorism which have allowed the ruling parties to keep the Jamaican working class divided against itself. Who was the instigator of this? Which party started the vicious cycle of partisan gang warfare? The evidence marshalled by Post points clearly in one direction: Bustamente and his Jamaican Labour Part (TLP). Although this suspicion has been commonplace to most Jamaicans (including JLP supporters), Post adduces rigorous historical testimony. In virtually every incident which he considers, the violence was begun by the choleric Bustamente and fanatical supporters who had pledged, as their song says, 'to follow Busta'til we die'. More often than not, the police cooperated by turning a blind eye to JLP attacks on the PNP or more radical groups. The tacit, official approval of the JLP's political thuggery, in turn, prompted the PNP to retaliations that effectively institutionalised intraworking-class Violence as an integral part of the Jamaican political process. Thus the PNP leadership in the run-up to the December 1944 general elections was so alarmed by the level of violence being meted out to its supporters and activists by the JLP mobs that several prominent members issued a declaration promising to 'meet force with greater force'. In the event, the campaign ended peacefully and there was no need to bring into action the 'Freedom Guards' which the PNP had promised to mobilize to protect their supporters on polling day.9 But in 1945 violent clashes erupted

^{* 511,} I, p v11

⁹ srt, II, p 484

between members of the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (Brru) and the smaller unions affiliated to the PNP over the representation of workers at several Kingston factories. Bustamante, now also Chief Minister, was reported to have instructed his supporters 'to fetch Ken Hill, Wills Isaacs and Glasspole [leading members of the PNP] to him willy-nilly and to 'beat up all PNP people wherever they might be found''.' ¹⁰ The partisan violence which Bustamante set in motion in the early 1940s has over the years graduated from stone throwing to the use of automatic weapons in the 1980s. Post promises to examine the phenomenon of violence in Jamaican politics more fully in his subsequent volume.

Despite the unquestionable originality and comprehensiveness of the three volumes, Post's history is not above certain criticisms. First of all, on a theoretical plane, there are intrinsic problems in his substitution of the Poulantzasian concept of 'power bloc' for the classical Marxist idea of a ruling class. The incorporation of the colonial state bureaucracy—an exceptionally complex institution as Post himself shows—into the 'power bloc' seems especially problematic, and there is considerable slippage in his use of the concept: at one stage he even goes so far as to include Bustamente integrally within it. It would have been, in my opinion, far more fruitful to speak of internal (e.g., the Ashenheim Family) and external (e.g., Tate and Lyle) components of a ruling class in the traditional sense, and to use the concept proffered by Marx (especially in his writings on Victorian Britain) of a governing caste to describe those directly engaged in the business of state management and statecraft. The concept of a 'power bloc'—its sub-category of 'fractions' notwithstanding—tends to conflate the categories of the ownership of the means of production and of administrative office in a needless way. 11

Nationalists or Anglophiles?

I also find it rather difficult to understand why the PNP, especially in 1938, should be regarded as a 'nationalist' party when, in fact, it was not even demanding self-government within the British Empire. The principal founder and leader of the party, Norman Manley, spoke in 1918 only of the need to make Jamaica 'ripe' for self-government and did not demand independence until considerably later. Indeed when he gave evidence to the Commission of Enquiry into the disturbances of 1938, he advocated a restricted franchise based on literacy tests within the colonial framework-a measure which obviously would have excluded the majority of labouring Jamaicans. It is also worth recalling that at the founding conference of the PNP in September 1938, Sir Stafford Cripps—whose visit to the island happened to coincide with the event—delivered by far the most radical of the speeches made, and was roundly condemned by the party hierarchy for publicly attacking British colonialism. To top it all, the supposedly 'nationalist' delegates closed the conference with a resounding rendition of 'God Save the King'. There is no evidence that this was part of some subtle ruse to outwit the British into conceding

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 527.

¹¹ In a personal communication, however, Post has acknowledged that 'the status of the concept of a "power bloc" is a problem, and I have been trying to develop it further in my more recent work, which is however on Viet Nam and thus rather far from Jamaical' (Post to James, 22 October 1982)

self-government to 'responsible' Jamaicans; rather it was a sincere expression of the Jamaican petty bourgeoisie's profound existential identification with the colonial metropolis.

And, contrary to Post, I would argue that Anglophilia and European mimicry continued to characterize the PNP up to the very eve of Independence in 1962. True, there were PNP supporters, including a handful of Marxists, who were genuine nationalists and had, at an early stage, demanded full independence; but they were a small minority and their views were not reflected in the PNP's programme or overall practice. A satisfactory explanation of the hegemony of the Anglophiliac ideology cannot be undertaken here; but we can suggest that is very much related to the class position, social insecurity and, to a certain extent, the self-contempt of the so-called 'brown' Jamaican middle class, born and bred within the milieu of British economic and cultural domination. It is common knowledge in Jamaica that the PNP was a party whose leadership was composed, almost completely, of the 'brown' bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. The social composition of the party leadership has changed somewhat over the last decade, but not as radically as many people imagine. ¹²

Post also pays scant attention to the role of merchant capital during the War-induced crisis of the Jamaican economy. Several researchers have suggested that commercial capitalists, especially those in the classical comprador import-export trades, obstructed the development of import-substitution industrialization—a la Brazil, Mexico or Argentina—during the Depression and War years when conditions, in at least certain sectors of the economy, might otherwise have favoured such a developmental strategy. ¹³ The attitude and role of the colonial state towards import-substitution is also not examined—a major omission.

Finally, on certain points, particularly in the Striks the Iron volumes, one finds a considerable amount of unnecessary equivocation on Post's part, and I found myself repeatedly thinking, 'Why didn't he ask Richard Hart?' Hart, one of the chief protagonists in the turmoil of 1938 and up to 1952 (when the Marxists were expelled) a leader of the left within the PNP, 18—as participant, historian and archivist—the greatest living authority on the Jamaican labour movement. Although Post had long discussions with Hart, these evidently concerned only 1938 and not the subsequent years. This is too bad, because further exchange with Hart might have clarified certain details, 14 especially on the activities and positions of the

13 Cf. O Jefferson, The Past-Wer Economic Development of Jamarca, Kingston 1972, pp 5-6 and 126 ff (and references therein); and Richard Hart, 'Jamarca and Self-Determination, 1660-1970', Rass, XIII, 3 (1972)

¹² For further discussion of these issues, see T. Munroe, The Politics of Constitutional Decolorisation: Jamaica 1944-62, Kingston 1972, L. Lindsay, The Myth of Independence. Middle Class Politics and Non-Mobilityation in Jamaica, Kingston 1975, and Orlando Patterson, 'Outside History Jamaica Today', NLR 31 (May/June 1965) For a general overview of the Caribbean middle classes, see C.L. R. James, 'The West Indian Middle Classes' in his Spheras of Existence, London 1980. The recent history of the PNP is discussed in Fitzroy Amburalcy, 'Jamaica: The Demise of "Democratic Socialism", NLR 128 (July/August 1981), Winston James, 'The Decline and Fall of Michael Manley', Capital and Class (forthcoming), and On 'Democratic Socialism' in Jamaica (forthcoming, London); and Crisis in the Caribbean, Fitzroy Amburalcy and Robin Cohen (eds.), Heinemann, London 1983.

¹⁴ Cf. 571, I, pp. 201 and 264. Robin Cohen has recently commented on the problem of oral history in relation to Post's project in 'Althusser Meets Anancy' Structuralism and Popular Protest in Ken Post's History of Jamaica', The Secretagical Review, 30, 2 (May 1982)

small Jamaican left: (In general Caribbean oral history has scarcely been explored, despite the fact there is not much time remaining to record the reminiscences and experiences of the generation of 1938.)

These criticisms, however, should not detract from the significance of Post's accomplishment. Although the constraints of academic publishing have made these three volumes hugely expensive (almost equivalent to a month's wages by local standards), it is to be hoped that the Caribbean left will critically debate and assimilate the lessons which Post adduces from his study of the formative period of the modern Jamaican working class. Surely when the time comes that the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Edgar Daley and of the other rebels of 1938 confront their oppressors they will be armed with more than sticks—and in more ways than one.



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communication

The World Economic Crisis

As the unemployment figures continue to increase implacably upwards, it is sobering to reflect that the underlying structural crisis of the world capitalist system is now in its tests year. The recent article by Michel Aglietta ('World Capitalism in the Eighties') in NLR 136 (November-December 1982) is undoubtedly a major contribution to a Marxist understanding of why chronic stagnation has dominated the world economy since the end of 1973. Especially stimulating is Aglietta's emphasis on the dynamics of the international division of labour between the main capitalist economies, and the international monetary relationships and contradictions to which this gives rise. Without observing the concrete motion of the relations among nations each having a specific insertion in the international economy, the global structure of the world economic crisis is not comprehensible. Thus Aglietta is correct to adopt a comparative and historical mode of analysis that rejects abstractions pitched at the level of 'capital logic' or the neo-classist fantasy of a homogeneous international economic order.

In my opinion, however, Aglietta bends the stick too far: his very proper emphasis on the international division of labour slips into an analytic position that makes the trade relations among heterogeneous nations the central process of crisis generation. It is especially curious that an author whose principal work, A Theory of Capitalist Regulation (NLB 1976), devoted such priority to the class struggle at the point of production in the etiology of crisis, should now have so little to say about the roles of class relations and capital accumulation. Why are the central problematics of the respective analyses kept so distinct?

The separation of themes reminds me of the implicit procedure of Marx's 'Critique of Political Economy'. His master plan, formulated at the end of the 1850s, envisioned the treatment of six major items: Capital, Landed Property, Wage Labour, State, Foreign Trade, and the World Market. As evident in the final form of the finished sections of Capital, the basic principles of the first three themes are initially treatable in abstraction from the latter three. Aglietta's recent essay raises the question of whether the latter three, especially foreign trade and the world market, can be analysed by themselves. I must register a methodological objection and say so. Even in the most concrete study of phenomena arising from the world economic crisis, it is necessary to refer to the underlying dynamics of accumulation and class struggle which are refracted through the surface of international commercial and financial relations. Otherwise, observations can not help being more or less fragmented, ad becand superficial. Likewise, the political implications of such observations will probably be obscured and misleading. Frankly, Aglietta's essay is not immune from such tendencies.

For example, he symptomatically fails to explain the oil shock waves as an *intrusis* factor in the development of the current crisis. Instead they are regarded more or less as external events, obviously because Aglietta believes that the division of

labour between the most advanced countries is the privileged locus of crisis formation. Similarly, the role of labour markets in the accumulation process—a focal point, of course, of Marx's own analysis of the 'general law of accumulation'—tends to be treated as an extraneous factor. In my view, this approach is incorrect. The very possibility of capitalism's long wave of expansion from the Korean War to the end of the war in Indochina rested upon the provision of cheap primary products from the Third World and upon the relative elasticity of the supply of labour-power. The 'virtuous circle' of reinforcing growth-patterns among the metropolises in the era of American hegemony assumed these two factors as its preconditions.

Conversely, the destruction of the virtuous pattern of accumulation and its transformation into the current tendency toward destabilizing 'vicious circles' cannot be explained as simply the consequence of the breakdown of the world trade equilibrium previously maintained under the Bretton Woods system. Although the collapse of Bretton Woods, and the emergence of a volatile monetary 'float', certainly amplified the inflationary surge of the late-seventies 'boom' (as well as the deflationary plunge of the current depression), the underlying systemic contradiction—i.e. the entracentulation of capital in relation to the imphy elasticity of both labour-power and primary products—would have sooner or later expressed itself as a profits squeeze due to the rise of wages and the price of raw materials. Far from being an external event, the first oil shock was the dramatic expression of the larger process whereby the increasing relative bargaining power of metropolitan trade unions and of certain strategic countries of the South was bringing to an explosive culmination a global overaccumulation of capital.

Certainly the restructuring of the world economy has been made far more protracted and difficult by inflation, unstable economic policies and the threat of financial collapse, but we should not underestimate the fundamental importance of overaccumulation as reflected in the current levels of idle capacity throughout the industrial world. Saturated market demand for consumer durables interacted with the price disequilibria unleashed by the rising cost of energy and tightness of labour markets to bring to a grinding halt the inflationary bubble of the late seventies. Significantly, the signal event was again an oil price shock wave: demonstrating that, even with energy-conserving programmes in place, the maintenance of a modal postwar level of consumption in the North remains far too expensively and wastefully dependent upon energy-intensive technology. Although the current oil 'glut' may give the appearance of a capitalist way out of this dilemma, it seems to me that the present situation is but a transition—albeit fraught with massive dangers for the international financial system—towards new energy and resource crises of the future.

Aglietta's treatment of the role of Japan in the international economic crisis also seems to me inadequate and even one-sided. Because of the primacy that he accords to the advanced capitalist countries' trade relations, I think he exaggerates the responsibility of Japan in the destabilization of world trade equilibrium and the destruction of the Bretton Woods system. In the first place, the growth of the competitive power of the EEC countries, above all Germany, played no less important a role in the undermining of an order historically linked to American hegemony. Secondly, it is important to remember the growth rate of Japan's share of world trade was higher in the prosperous period through the mid-sixties than in the recessionary period after 1973. Indeed the Japanese share in the import trade of North America or the EEC has remained more or less stable since 1973, while Japan's own share in the import trade from the developing and oil-producing countries in the 1970s grew to more than twice the proportion of her share in total world export trade. Thus the Japanese market has been far from 'impermeable' and undoubtedly contributed massively to the stabilization of the

trade balances of key new developing countries and oil states—important markets for us and European exports.

This is not to say that I discount any destabilizing role for Japan at all in the march towards the current depression. However, I think a more accurate and useful characterization is that the pattern of Japanese economic growth, with its dependence on manufactured exports to advanced countries to defray its enormous Third World import bill, as well as its internal absorption of labour from the countryside (in contrast to the import of foreign labourers), has highlighted and anticipated the general problem of capital overaccumulation vis and primary products and labour markets. Today Japan shares the malaise of other capitalist economies, suffering from stagnant export and internal markets, increasing unemployment, a serious fiscal crisis and a high rate of business failure. Far from an exception, Japan is an integral component of the crisis. A recognition of this fact is especially necessary if we hope to build an international working-class solidarity against the common affliction of capitalist depression

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SOLIDARNOSC AND SOCIALISM

Oliver MacDonald The Polish Vortex

Perry Anderson Trotský on Stalinism

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or Labour?

Ken Worpole

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A half century ago, the German labour movement, partly disarmed by its own disunity, was smashed by fascism. In the wake of this calamity, and in order to explain its possibility, Trotsky undertook the systematic theorization of the ascendency of Stalinism within the Soviet Union and the Comintern. As Perry Anderson points out in the lecture which we publish, Trotsky's The Revolution Betrayed remains a Marxist masterpiece, whose sociological richness and epochal historical perspective have outlasted contemporary attempts to construct ad hoc theories of 'bureaucratic collectivism' or 'state capitalism'. Yet if Trotsky's portrait of the contradictions of Soviet society remains arrestingly accurate, his belief that Stalinism was a sui generis outgrowth of the international isolation of the October Revolution has not been vindicated. The Stalinist model—'hostile at once to capitalist property and to proletarian liberty'-has been replicated on a multi-national scale and within a complexity of socio-economic frameworks which were unforeseen by Trotsky.

An understanding of the workings of these transitional regimes, and of the transformations required in them for an authentic socialism, has long been a principal concern of the Review. In this issue, Oliver MacDonald, skilfully combining narrative and analysis, gives an account of the crisis in Polish Communism and of the trajectory of Solidarity from its origins in the revolt in the Baltic shippards in 1980 to its eventual containment by the martial law regime. MacDonald argues that the states of Eastern Europe and the social struggles within them cannot be understood if the apparatus of power is regarded as a self-sufficient structure sustained only by repression and a consciousness of its own interests. The monolithicity of party rule involves a specific relationship to workingclass organization and rights: an arbitration between bureaucratic aterests and class interests, in which the former is obliged to find some bothold in the latter. The workers are denied elementary civic liberties but are offered a series of social rights notable by their absence in capitalism: job security, price stability, comparatively low income differentials, and weak labour discipline. While the proletariat of the capitalist world is disorganized and fragmented by economic crisis, that of the East remains a massive and increasingly self-conscious social presence.

MacDonald shows how Solidarity erupted as a response to the government's attack on these previously established social rights. As the movement developed it became the most spectacular affirmation of the working-class capacity for self-organization seen in Europe since May 1968. Most of the concrete demands advanced by Solidarity were not only compatible with socialism, but were preconditions for its advance out of the morass of bureaucracy, waste and corruption which had developed a under the previous regimes. But Solidarity itself was not an explicitly socialist force even though it battled for workers' social and political rights. Memories of 1956, 1970 and 1976 made Polish workers increasingly suspicious of the credentials of reform Communism while the historical formation of Poland lent prestige to the two unquestioned national institutions: the Church and the Army. MacDonald traces the failure of oppositional currents within the party to regain the initiative or win back popular endorsement, while also emphasizing the parallel inability of Solidarity to transcend syndicalism or to break free of the influence of the Church hierarchy. He pinpoints the replacement of Kania by Jaruzelski and Solidarity's response to the 'Bydgoszc affair' in the Spring of 1981 as the crucial turning points.

Popular respect for the military and Solidarity's deference to clerical appeals undermined the developing 'mass block... of the main party organizations together with Solidarity'—as Deputy Prime Minister Rakowski was later to describe the threat, or promise, of a quite new relationship between the party and the working class. The subsequent decline in the vitality of both Solidarity and of the forces for renewal inside the PZPR paved the way for the declaration of martial law later in the year. The crisis of Polish Communism is, of course, not yet resolved and does not offer neat or ready-made lessons for the future. As an editor of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, MacDonald is active in the British labour movement in documenting and supporting the struggle for socialist democracy. Polish Vortex' thus concludes by considering, in the light of the Polish experience so far, the conditions which would permit a genuine socialist renewal in the East.

In recent years, 'discourse' has tended to displace 'structure' as the central motif in avant gards social theory, indicating a corresponding shift in research interests towards problems of social subjectivity and ideological practice. In a spirited critique, Len Doyal and Roger Harris challenge what they regard as widespread, if often covert, 'linguistic idealism'. Invoking Quine's famous paradox of 'radical translation'—the problem of interpretation and meaning between two alien languages—they

demonstrate the inevitable relativism and indeterminancy that result from making language its own ontological ground. Alternatively, they argue that language use and cognition depend always upon pre-existing contexts of practical activity and social labour whose intelligibility is independent and non-discursive.

Finally, Ken Worpole provides a fascinating account of the influence of the American 'tough guy' novel upon male working-class sensibility in Britain. This autumn *Verso* will publish his major study of popular reading and working-class writers.

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The Polish Vortex: Solidarity and Socialism

The greatest and most sustained popular upsurge in Europe for decades has left both bourgeois and working-class opinion in the West profoundly bewildered as to its basic historical meaning. A standard formula—used by both *The Times* and miners' leader Arthur Scargill—has been that Solidarity was an excellent thing but that it was going too far, or travelling too fast. Yet the deeper implicit worry on all sides was not so much the speed or extent of Solidarity's journey, but its point of departure and the nature of its ultimate destination. The main purpose of this article is to try to discover the answer to this question. A second aim will be to try to explore the issue of Solidarity's defeat in December 1981: why it was possible for this huge mass movement to be driven underground by the imposition of martial law.

What follows is not an attempt to encompass the history of Poland between 1980 and the beginning of 1982. Our analysis will omit serious considerations of important regions and dimensions of the story: notably the peasantry and Rural Solidarity, internal Church politics, events in the Sejm, international

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reverberations and so on. Throughout, the focus of our attention will be on Solidarity, its antagonist and the main intermediary political forces within Poland.

Introduction: Class and State in Eastern Europe

The fundamental feature of the Polish upheaval that has been so difficult for socialists (and anti-socialists) in the West to grasp has been the fact that the Polish workers combine a tenacious political opposition to continued monopolistic rule by the Polish Communist Party (PZPR) with a no less tenacious defence of a group of rights never guaranteed by any capitalist state. Opposition to a pre-democratic political order is less difficult for people in the parliamentary states of the West to grasp than the fact that the workers in Eastern Europe possess certain post-capitalist social rights (whose preservation is, in the end, of critical importance in the stable maintenance of these states). We must therefore begin by looking at these social rights to which East European workers are strongly attached, and which, for obvious reasons, bourgeois writers working within the cold war consensus tend to gloss over.

The starting point of any serious analysis of East European societies is that the decisive means of production within them are nationalized, and with the suppression of the class of private capitalists has gone the suppression of the capitalist market as the regulator of economic activity. Instead, the forms of economic activity become matters of political struggle and political decision. The distribution of factors of production and the ways they are related to each other are decided, and can only be decided, by the predominant powers in the political field. Indeed an enormously wide range of socio-economic issues excluded from the political system's jurisdiction by capitalist class relations are brought within the field of politics by the nationalization of the means of production. The distribution of wealth and income and the entire price structure become matters for political manipulation, together with the length of the working day, the intensity of work, the extent of unemployment, and the allocation of investment resources.

In the classical Marxist conception of socialist transition, the nationalization of the economy would be accompanied by its socialization through the political control of the working class in a new type of democratic regime. This has, of course, not happened in Eastern Europe. Instead, the political field has been occupied by a monopolistic Communist Party while all other political trends have been excluded from the political system. Within the political system power is concentrated in the hands of an elite of party and state officials, essentially appointed from above to these positions through the so-called nomentalature system. All instruments of state power are tightly controlled by the party elite and members of the party are not allowed to engage in any organized struggle for alternative policies to those of the party leadership.

¹ The best overall account of the crisis available in English is Neil Ascherson, *The Politik August*, Harmondsworth 1981. Also see the often brilliantly illuminating writings of the Polish sociologist Jadwiga Stanizkia, some of which are collected in *Politics: La Rivolation Autoliantis*, pur, Paris 1982.

All this is widely recognized by socialists and non-socialists alike in the West. But the conclusion that has traditionally been drawn from this, particularly by devotees of American totalitarian theories of East European states, is that the regimes are virtually omnipotent, that they have near total freedom to mould an atomized mass in any way they please. Yet for Marxists such notions are absurd. The party—state leaders of Eastern Europe do indeed wield enormous power, but within a framework of socio-economic relationships established when the new states were constructed in the late 1940s, a framework which places strict limits on the exercise of this power.

It would be possible to conceive of nationalized property relations co-existing with massive unemployment and the progressive immiseration of the working class. This is a theoretical possibility, but it does not describe the actual history of these states. In practice, nationalized property has entailed a number of social and economic corollaries: full employment and economic security; very low and largely stable prices for essential items such as food, housing, transport etc.; rising living standards; a large and generally growing degree of social egalitarianism (in comparison with capitalist states); a lower level of work intensity; and, for a minority of the manual working class, prospects of social privileges and upward mobility considerably greater than under capitalism. Moreover, the rule of the party requires a degree of active involvement by its members, and corresponding recruitment from the working class, at every level in the workplace and the locality in order to invigilate and propel the plan.

Almost all these phenomena are indeed registered in Western bourgeois literature on the states of Eastern Europe, but they are mentioned overwhelmingly in the context of the supposed economic evils of these state systems. Thus we hear an unending stream of scorn for the arbitrary prices, the slack work rhythm, the supposed absurdities of full employment in terms of rational use of labour resources, and so on. The micro-economic rationality of the capitalist enterprise is held up for comparison with what goes on in a Soviet factory: ignoring, of course, the gigantic macro-economic waste generated by the irrationalities of the capitalist system as a whole.

What is less often registered is that these supposedly irrational social features of the East European states are perceived by their own working populations as important social gains and rights. All the evidence indicates that workers in Eastern Europe place a high value on economic and social security, price stability, social egalitarianism and rising living standards. And these phenomena, presented in the capitalist world as economic gains contingent upon capitalist economic conditions, are perceived by workers in Eastern Europe as socialist rights, guaranteed by the very foundations of the state.

All the historical experience of these states demonstrates that any attempt to tamper with these rights is liable to produce a political crisis, and consequently the regimes must operate within the framework of these given social conditions. In order to do so, they seek to mobilize the working class for production by other methods than those of the

capitalist economic whip of insecurity and the threat of unemployment, Instead they have had to rely upon explicitly political instruments, above all the Communist Party and its satellite organizations. Workers wishing to substantially improve their economic position have been able to do so by subscribing to the norms laid down by the Communist Party, meeting individual work norms, and carrying out all the various economic and social directives of the party. Those who do so and join the party or become activists in one of the satellite organizations can gain very substantial privileges promotion eventually out of manual labour, better housing, holidays abroad and a range of queue-jumping possibilities. Only a minority of the working class, though often a large one, does in fact join the party or play a role in satellite institutions, but the requirement that the regime binds such a minority to itself is not an arbitrary element in the system, but is indeed at least as important as the regime's complementary capacity to use repression against those sections of the working class which refuse to subordinate themselves to the system.

An important consequence of these arrangements should be stressed: when they work effectively, there is little rational, economic basis for Western, capitalist-style trade unionism in the East European states. In the West, workers confront a vast array of commodities and services available on the market in conditions of general inflation. They have a permanent pressure upon them, therefore, to increase their money wages in order to maintain and strengthen their purchasing power. But typically in Eastern Europe essential items are governed by frozen prices, and while workers have rising money wages, they must confront shortages and various forms of official and unofficial rationing. Furthermore, access to goods is a problem of tackling queues, most of which are controlled by the political authorities. It therefore makes little sense for workers to engage in collective action to demand higher money wages. Their attention must rather be turned towards the political authorities as targets of individual or collective pressure.²

Yet while the economic and social systems bring the party—government right into the factories and into the centre of everyday life, and push the workers towards involvement within the political structures of the state, the internal mechanisms of Communist Party rule do not give the working population an effective voice in the affairs of the state. Political participation is encouraged but only in the field of *implementing* policies agreed at the top. No effective channels exist for the workers to play an active and conscious part in formulating policy and taking the strategic decisions about how resources should be allocated. This political passivity and subordination weighs increasingly heavily upon the working class, the more that living standards and cultural levels rise, but the enormous concentration of institutional power in the hands of the

² There is, of course, another channel of access to desirable goods and services other than those mediated through the political institutions—the black market. And in almost all East European societies all sections of the population do participate in the black market. But for many sections of the working class access to really important goods and services through this channel is not open because transactions require Western currencles. Thus the industrial workers are continually brought back to their relationship with the party as the really crucial relationship in their efforts to improve their own and their family's standing.

central authorities makes it possible for them to prevent the frustrations and humiliations of the non-party workers from finding any open means of expression.

An open challenge from below can occur under three conditions: first, when what are conceived by large numbers of workers to be basic social rights underpinning 'real, existing socialism' are undermined by government policy; secondly, where workers acquire a sense of their capacity to engage in collective action with some chance of success; and thirdly, where they acquire a sense of their own independent identity as a class, on a national scale. For various reasons these conditions all came to be present in Poland at the end of the 1970s.

I. The Prelude to August

Two alternative frameworks jostle for our attention in trying to make sense of the forces that produced August 1980 and Solidarity. One urges us to view the upheaval in terms of East—West relations, incorporating both the phase of détente of the early and mid-1970s and the intensifying 'war of manoeuvre' between Washington and Moscow towards the end of the decade. The second urges us to see the crisis primarily as a domestic confrontation between those at the base and those at the summit of the Polish state.

The International Conjuncture

An adequate account of the origins of Solidarity would have to intertwine both perspectives. The Polish crisis of 1980 was the first challenge to Stalinism in an East European society in which both direct and indirect Western influence was strongly present in its origins. In the economic field, Poland became heavily indebted to Western banks and governments to the point where it could no longer meet its obligations by 1980; central control over foreign trade was loosened; important sectors of industry became dependent on Western companies for components, materials and spare parts; sectors of the economic administration became deeply involved in networks of corruption involving capitalist companies (and no doubt intelligence services); and a parallel dollar economy flourished; moreover, in the late 1970s the government managed to make itself directly dependent upon the Us government for tackling the most sensitive issue of domestic politics—the market supply of meat. American credits for grain shipments, supplied by the Carter administration for political rather than economic reasons, rose massively in the last three years of the 1970s. And it was a direct consequence of the changed line from Western financial centres made clear to the Polish government in May 1980, that Gierek was forced to raise meat prices on July 1st and thus triggered the working-class movement.³ Increasing economic integration with the West was abetted by the Carter administration's strategy of using economic incentives ('most favoured nation' trading

³ See Juan Cameron, 'What the Bankers Did to Poland', Fortion, 22.9.1980. On the more general economic crisis in the 1970s, see my article, written under the name 'Peter Green', "The Third Round in Poland', NLR 101/102 (February-April 1977).

status, commodity credits, and so on) to promote a more general political and cultural 'open door' to the West.

A further crucial influence from the West was the election of Cardinal Wojtyla as Pope in October 1978 and his visit to Poland the following June. As he had shown in his encouragement for the growing political opposition currents around the KOR when he was still Archbishop of Cracow, Wojtyla was an entirely new force in the Catholic hierarchy. The aging Primate, Wyszynski, had ruled the Church autocratically since the late 1940s, reviving it as a great national symbol but also keeping it in the mould of pre-industrial, peasant religion. Wyszynski had been failing to make an effective religious appeal to the growing urban population, and his relations even with the Catholic liberal intelligentsia were stormy. With little interest in 'Western' social or political values, he paid scant attention to directives from Rome, and combined thunderous affirmations of traditional peasant cultural values with great flexibility in compromising with the state, being ready to help calm political tensions during the periodic political crises, in return for practical, institutional benefits for the Church. Wojtyla, much more attuned to the West and loyal to Vatican requirements, was also, almost uniquely in the episcopate, an intellectual at home in urban intellectual circles. In contrast to the majority of the Polish hierarchy who feared (and fears) urban, secular, mass movements, and has been much happier trying to seal off its flock from outside influences while sorting out problems with the state through closed bargaining at the top, Wojtyla aimed to win the ideological battle for the urban population by harnessing their desires to his own brand of populist religion.

Wojtyla's June 1979 visit to Poland was designed to exert a profound impact on the entire political climate of the country. He sought to strengthen popular yearnings for an improvement in their lives and give them a sense of the great power of the Church. He emphasized the theme of human rights and presented the Church as their guardian. And, while formally referring to the need for realism, he gave the overwhelming impression that miracles were possible so long as the people followed him, a theme that culminated in his astonishing vision of being able to unite Europe, enunciated at Gniezno: Is not the Holy Spirit disposed to see that his Polish Pope, this Slav Pope, should at this very moment reveal the spiritual unity of Europe?

These ideological, political and economic influences from the West have been widely reported in the media here, and form the 'common-sense' background for most people trying to understand why Solidarity emerged. But they are very far from being an adequate explanation. They do not tell us why the Polish government deliberately opened up the country to such influences—i.e., the domestic social and political reasons

⁴ From Peter Hebblethwaite's excellent critical analysis, Introducing Pope John Paul II, London 1982, p. 48 The considerable influence of the Polish Pope over the subsequent course of events is difficult to gauge in its concrete effects. There is, however, evidence to show that it seriously wormed the hierarchy of the domestic Polish Church, which in subsequent months from the Pope's visit sharply distanced itself from oppositional activities it had previously endorsed and embarked upon negotiations to establish—for the first time ever—formal relationships with the pre-government Catholic lay organizations.

for this turn. Nor do they explain why these influences contributed towards the creation of a very specific and unprecedented social phenomenon—an organized, independent working-class movement struggling for very distinctive social goals. To explain such phenomena we must turn to the domestic situation in Poland in the 1970s.

The Domestic Configuration of Forces

The starting point for any analysis of the evolving relationship of forces in Poland in the 1970s was the outcome of the Baltic crisis of 1970 and Gierek's decisions at that time. The political changes of that time gave the Polish working class, at least along the Baltic, a sense of their independent identity as a class with considerable potential power. For the government to give way by removing Gomulka in the face of the Baltic workers' protests was a momentous event. And to surmount the crisis's consequences in a state with a nationalized and planned economy, the PZPR leadership gave a commitment to massively re-enforce the workers' economic and social rights. To try to meet these promises, Gierek utilized détente to make a bold opening to the world capitalist economy, massively borrowing credit and buying technology. During his first five years, economic growth did increase dramatically (1975 GNP 50% up on 1970) along with living standards (real wages up 40%), and there were signs of upward social mobility. But in face of rising expectations, he couldn't hold the line on the single most important front of all in 1970: food prices. Wages soured from 473.4 billion zloty in 1971 to 883.0 billion in 1975—300 billion more than planned—with enhanced consumer demand concentrated especially on meat, whose per capita consumption rose from 53 kilos in 1970 to a staggering 70.3 kilos in 1975 (equivalent British figures for the two years showed a drop from 50.4 kilos to 46.2 kilosl). But with meat prices frozen the government was forced to pay a fortune in subsidies while simultaneously being unable to guarantee increased supply.⁵

The government tried to break out of this social relationship of forces with the working class, which amounted to a virtual economic state of seige, by attempting a 60% rise in food prices in June 1976. But the working class would have none of it and got its way, after strikes and demonstrations. The government suffered a massive loss of authority which added a renewed political crisis to the economic one. The Gierek leadership's response to this double crisis from the summer of 1976 set in motion the dynamics that led to August 1980. It had offered the working class socialist social rights and had gone deep into debt to the West in order to provide them. Gierek's gamble on export-led growth—without serious reformation of internal corruption or significant democratization of planning—miscalculated both the structural contradictions of Polish society and the prospects of the world market. After 1976 the situation deteriorated spectacularly: the government became even more dependent economically on the West; Western involvement disrupted the functioning of centralized planning; living standards stopped rising and then fell slightly; spending on social services was cut back; the black market and

⁵ The meat price subsidy alone rose from 12 3 billion zloty in 1971 to 91.4 billion in 1979, despite special shops selling 18% of all meat at higher prices by that time.

social differentiation grew; and the working class became increasingly angry, not only at the frustration of its quantitative demands, but especially at what it saw as the violation of its socialist social rights.

The PZPR leadership's initial political response to this social crisis was a considerable departure from classical Stalinism. It allowed an intellectual opposition to grow to levels of sustained and protracted activity never before seen in postwar Eastern Europe. It sought a new level of co-operation and understanding with the Church hierarchy. And it generated what the Polish sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis has called a politics of 'lame, bureaucratic pluralism', with separate social groups able to engage in limited collective protests without being crushed, provided they sought a solution to them through the mediation of the central bureaucracy. During the last three years of the 1970s about a thousand strikes took place, the great majority settled in the strikers' favour.

But perhaps most important was Gierek's policy towards the country's three-and-a-half million industrial workers concentrated heavily in very large factories (over half of them in factories with more than 1500 employees). Without actually listening much to what they were saying, Gierek went out of his way to pay court to these workers. Their wages were kept high, their canteens cheap and well stocked, their plants hailed as the 'citadels of Polish socialism'. After 1976 an intense and successful effort was made to recruit industrial workers into the party: between 1975 and 1979 the proportion of workers increased from 42% to 46%, the highest percentage in the Soviet bloc. And these members were heavily concentrated in the big plants—27% of all manual worker PZPR members were in the 164 biggest plants. Furthermore it was by no means necessarily the case that PZPR activists in the factories were looked upon with suspicion by the non-party workers. A sizeable proportion of them enjoyed workers' confidence and were ranked on the side of labour rather than management. In 1979, the founder of the unofficial workers' paper Robotnik, Jan Litynski, a leading KOR activist, described the workingclass party members' attitudes: 'They are convinced that it is the workers who rule Poland-the term "rule" expressing both their need for prestige (workers sit on the executive committee) and a genuine feeling of responsibility for the fate of the country. However they really feel tied to the cause of the working class, not hesitating to show their solidarity with strike movements, and even take the head of such movements by turning to account their organizational experience they acquired in the Party.'6 Litynski also confirmed that the PZPR was far less compromised in the eyes of workers than the official trade unions. (At the same time as seeking to integrate the working class in industry into the PZPR, the party leadership also used repression to try to stamp out unofficial, external political or trade-union activities within the working class, such as the movement around Robotnik.)

If the PZPR managed to integrate such a large proportion of workers into the party—one in every nine workers was a PZPR member—and if these

⁶ Interview in Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, III, 5 (November 1979—January 1980), p. 12. Also see Alex Pravda's important article, 'Poland 1980' (Soviet Studies [April 1982]) for a mass of valuable information on working-class attitudes at this time

members retained a great measure of trust amongst the non-party workers, why did August 1980 need to happen at all? The answer to this lies partly in the general bureaucratic-centralist functioning of Stalinized communist parties and partly in three specific features of the party—state regime in Poland in the late 1970s. These can be briefly listed:

- (a) The generalized growth of corruption within the ranks of party and state officialdom produced by the opportunities offered by the economic crisis and by cynicism and political demoralization amongst such officials.
- (b) An administrative re-organization carried out by Gierek which simultaneously broke down the state administrative structure from 17 major provinces to 49, while massively recentralizing the structure of enterprises into large national conglomerates, whose managements were given powers to deal directly with Western companies and with the central ministries. The effect of these parallel changes was to make the factory and provincial party executives incapable of effectively controlling economic management. Plant management could trump local party directives with decisions from higher conglomerate management, while the latter, with plants in many provinces, were beyond the jurisdiction of any mere regional party secretary.
- (c) Into this picture we should insert Gierek's cadre policy within the party apparatus. During the 1970s Gierek massively purged the apparatus of its staff from the Gomulka period, replacing the old guard with young university graduates in such subjects as public administration, fitted only for a career as a professional party official. Such a policy had the 'merit' from Gierek's perspective of making such functionaries utterly dependent on the will of the central secretariat with its monopoly on promotions—after all, their training left them no other alternative career.

Together these three ingredients comprised a formidable formula for undermining the 'leading role of the party apparatus'. Instead of the party organizations controlling their professional apparatus, which in turn controlled the economic administration and trade unions, a pattern developed along the following lines: the local party apparatus ignored pressure from the membership; plant management ignored the local party apparatus and turned the official union apparatus into its passive tool; the national conglomerate management manipulated the central ministries; and the central ministries presented the party centre with fait accomplis rubber-stamped by Gierek. The wheels of the whole system were kept turning by powerful and often corrupt lobbies operating beyond any form of public control. Thus Gierek's so-called 'economic manoeuvre' after 1976 was simply sabotaged by such forces.

Thus the principal result of recruiting young, skilled industrial workers into the party was to enable them to see a good deal of what was going on and to prove to them how impotent the local PZPR apparatus was in the face of this informal power structure. Opposition to this situation did develop within the party hierarchy, led by figures like Olszowski and Grabski who appealed for support to frustrated provincial party secretaries in the run-up to the Party Congress of February 1980. But the

One such figure, Zabinaki in Opole, took his local struggle to the point of banning all plant managements within his province from carrying out any central ministerial directive

Congress was Gierek's last chance as far as the PZPR's working-class base was concerned. He failed to grasp it. So the politically aware sections of the working class gave up thinking about action above and started pondering action from below. August was on the agenda. 8

II. Solidarity: A Workers' Movement Sui Generis

The events in Gdansk during August 1980 are sufficiently widely known to require no narrative here. However, before turning to the rise of Solidarity itself, we should stress certain crucial (and indeed obvious) features of the August strike movement too often overlooked in journalistic accounts.

The first key point is that the strike movement immediately spread from Gdansk to other centres until it became a national movement encompassing all the main industrial centres of the country and no less than 4,000 enterprises, including the great majority of large enterprises. If it had not spread, the strike could not conceivably have been victorious. The workers in the Lenin Shipyard played a critically important role as a trigger and a focus for the whole movement, but to say this does not explain why workers throughout the country were ready to respond to the lead from Gdansk. Nor do theories of a 'dissident' conspiracy tell us anything. Gdansk was muque as the only industrial centre where previously active opposition groups played a significant role in organizing the August strikes. They played no role in Szczecin nor Silesia. And the two cities where oppositional groups were by far the strongest-Warsaw and Cracow—were amongst the least affected by the August movement. So what was the social agency that spread the strikes? Certainly not the Church. In Gdansk itself, Bishop Kaczmarek's first response to the strike committee's appeal for a mass to be said in the Lenin Shippard was to refuse until they gained permission from the provincial party secretary. The Bishop of Szczecin was equally conservative (and in any case the whole issue of holding a mass in the Warski yard was initially contentious among the strike leadership). Wyszynski himself in his only public speech during the crisis broadcast on TV caused bitter resentment amongst the strikers by urging a return to work.

without first gaining his personal clearance: a clearly illegal ban which gave him the credentials to sweep into the poliburo along with Olszowski as soon as Gierek fell.

Before the Frost, Pluto, London 1982 The complete set of Gdansk strike bulletins is

It was not difficult for outside observers to see it coming. In November 1979 we reported 'Out of the comers of their eyes, all political forces noted an incident in Gdansk: workers in department Kz in the Lenin Shippard struck for two days in October. A central committee representative rushed north to negotiste a settlement. Unnecessary jittens? Perhaps But with workers' living standards falling many nerves are strained in Warnew at the thought that the subterranean giant of Poland's politics may again move out and stamp its will on the country's history' (Labour Focus, III, 5 See also my "The Struggle for Independent Workers' Organization in Gdansk' in the subsequent issue of Labour Focus.) And those ready to pore over the debates in the election campaign in the offical unions during these pre-August months would have been able to read advance notices of most of the demands raised by the Inter-Pactory Strike Committee later in the year (See George Kolankiewicz's important article, 'The Working Class under Anomic Socialism', in Blue-Coller Workers in Eastern Europe, Jan F. Trisks and Charles Gati (ed.), London 1981, p. 136)

The most evocative account in English can be found in Jean-Yves Potel, The Sammer

The truth is that there was no organized agency spreading the strike movement at all. But a cursory glance at the forces initiating the big leaps in the strike movement beyond Gdansk shows a very strong presence of PZPR members—workers, technicians and foremen—amongst the leaders of the strike movement and, in many cases, amongst its initiators. This was the case in Sczcecin, Wroclaw, Poznan, Walbrzych, Jastrzebie, Torun and many other centres. ¹⁰

At the PZPR Central Committee meeting at the height of the strike on 24 August, Edward Pustelniak, a cc member from the Szczecin Repair Shipyard participating in the strike, told the plenum something about the attitudes of many working-class party members: 'As a worker and as a member of the party, I have to say that there are certain things that I do not understand. Because when all is said and done, the majority of the problems at present being raised by the strikers have already been raised several times within party meetings, in particular in the meetings preparatory to the 8th Congress of the PZPR. The non-party members knew this and they supported us; furthermore, they believed that our voices would finally be listened to. Unfortunately this proved not to be the case. . . . But to carry on like this gives the lie to what we have been saying and repeating in public, namely that the party listens to the opinions of its members, as well as those of non-party members, and that it draws from these opinions the necessary conclusions.' 11

The August strike movement was thus very far from being either the product of some 'anti-socialist' group or a spontaneous outburst of despair or primitive pleberan revenge. It could much better be described as the collective effort by the elite industrial and transport workers of the country—party and non-party workers—to lead the society out of its crisis. The Gierek leadership was seen as utterly incapable of solving a crisis it was seen to have created. It was the Gomulka story all over again. What way out? The collective thinking of the politically aware Polish workers was transparently clear in its practical logic based on experience. There was no point in leaving matters to a new leadership of the party. The workers needed a new instrument under their control for ensuring change. Thoughts went back to Gdansk and Szczecin in 1970-71 and the demands then for independent trade unions, the right to strike, and free information. How could this be achieved? The strikes of 24 June 1976 had shown a way provided workers occupied their plants and didn't flood uncontrollably onto the streets. And the Gdansk workers were using the organization of an inter-factory strike committee: again a weapon that had proved successful on the Baltic in 1971.

One final element in the August strikes is too often glossed over: the social demands of the movement. Formulated democratically with great

¹⁰ About one-third of the Inter-Factory Strike Committee (MKS) delegates in Gdansk inself were estimated to be PEFR members, and the two vice-chairpersons of the Szczecin MKS were PEFR members as were five of the fifteen members of the MKS presidium. The first Silesian mines to strike were Walbraych The Walbraych mines, the first Silesian pits to go on strike, were led by PEFR members (one third of the miness, in fact, were party members) and the same was true in the key strike centre in Upper Silesia, the Jastræbie mines. In Szczecin the Parnicza shipyard was brought into the strike within hours of the Warski yard on the initiative of its party secretary.

¹¹ Potel, pp. 144-45.

care, they bound together the more politically conscious section of workers with the broad majority and they indicated principles which were by no means the commonsense of some undifferentiated 'society': workers should be compensated for striking; there should be a flat-rate increase for all employees (helping the lower paid), the 'commercial' shops and hard currency shops should be closed; the privileges of the police and party apparatus should be abolished, as should special stores; family subsidies should be equalized; there should be rationing rather than free-floating prices, and a massive shift in spending towards social welfare. This social programme was classic in the socialist egalitarian assumptions underlying it. So too were the radical democratic freedoms called for in the twenty-one demands: freedom of speech, the press and publication; 'availability of the mass media to representatives of all faiths' (the sole demand relating to the Church), the release of all political prisoners; and measures to enable 'all sectors and social classes to take part in discussion of the reform programme'.

The social and political radicalism of the workers on strike was not matched by the majority of the politically aware Polish intelligentsia, amongst whom a broad consensus had developed in the late 1970s that accepted the necessity of market reforms and attendant inequalities (including unemployment, price rises and special hard-currency shops). The bulk of the intelligentsia initially considered the prospect of independent trade unions as wildly unrealistic and viewed the potential of working-class actions as a destructive and chaotic force. When the power and discipline of the strike movement revealed itself, however, the intelligentsia moved towards it with the aim of assuming influence over its direction. Similarly, the Church hierarchy followed behind the example of the local priests who were already involved in supporting the movement. For their part, the workers welcomed such support unreservedly, gained enormous confidence from it, and hoped that their own lack of political experience outside the PZPR and their exclusion from theoretical culture could be compensated for by assistance from the intelligentsia and the Church. With such help they hoped to be able to steer the country out of its crisis, using independent trade unions to force the PZPR to transform its egalitarian and democratic rhetoric into practical reforms.

The Organization of the Working Class

Solidarity was in large measure created pragmatically out of the very difficult conditions of September 1980 when, despite the Gdansk Agreements, many sectors of the state and party administration were trying to resist the formation of new unions. This official harassment accounted in large measure for the fact that one single national union was formed—against the initial resistance of the Gdansk strike leadership—and it also helped ensure that the regional structures of the movement remained based upon the model of the Inter-Factory Strike Committees of August. The structure combined the external pattern of organization used by the PZPR (factory, regional and national instances) with an internal pattern that was the PZPR's polar opposite: initiative from below, great autonomous power in the regions and a purely co-ordinating role for the national leadership, as opposed to 'democratic centralism' and the

nomenklatura system of appointment from above. Solidarity's structure was thus highly political, emphasizing the unity of the workers as a class, rather than their sectional diversity (which was expressed only in industrial commissions without decision-making powers). This proletarian unity and distinctiveness was further enhanced by the exclusion of other social groups apart from wage earners from Solidarity's ranks—party and state officials, private peasants, students, small craftspeople and traders.

Solidarity grew with extraordinary rapidity, reaching three million by the end of September, some six million by the end of October and eight million by the end of November. According to the union's own figures published at its first Congress in October 1981, membership stood at 9,410,005 out of a total work-force of 12.5 million in the nationalized sector of the economy. There is no precise figure of the number of party members in the movement, but the Soviet leadership put it at about one million out of just under three million. ¹² Starting out with more than 80 regional centres, Solidarity eventually consolidated these into 39 regions, with two-thirds of its membership in 10 key regional organizations reflecting the main industrial centres of the country:

Katowice			
MILLOWICE	1,400,000		
Warsaw	911,000		
Wroclew	910,000		
Cracow	645,000		
Gdansk	532,000		
Lodz	463,000		
Poznan	429,000		
Szczecin	353,∞∞		
Lublin	332,000		
Bydgoszcz	275,000		
TOTAL	6,210,000		

During the August strikes, it was the industrial and transport workers who played the leading role and it was they also who took the lead in building Solidarity. Other sections of the workers flooded to join after seeing the movement's strength in the August conflict, in the 3rd October national strike, in the episcopate's support and in the union's registration on November 10th. But throughout Solidarity's legal existence, the three-and-a-half million industrial workers continued to be the dominant social group in the movement, determining basic programmatic aims and methods of struggle. Their influence was expressed throughout the key large plants in each region such as Huta Katowice and the July Manifesto mine in Upper Silesia, the Lenin and Paris Commune yards in the Gdansk-Gdynia area, the Warski yard and Police chemical plant in Szczecin, Huta Lenina in Cracow, Fso Zeran, Ursus and Huta Warszawa in Warsaw, the Pafaweg railway wagon plant and the Thorez mine in lower Silesia, the zispo works in Poznan, the Marchlewski works in Lodz, and so on. The regional leaders tended to come from these plants, and the workers in each region tended to take their cue from the decisions of the workers in these plants. Previously hailed by the party leadership as Poland's 'citadels of socialism', they contained the most highly-paid

¹² Leonid Zamyatin, 20 6 81, quoted in Kevin Ruane, The Polith Challenge, BBC, London 1982, p. 199.

sections of manual workers, the largest factory party organizations, and generally the most able and flexible plant managements. In classic proletarian fashion, the workers in these plants tended to be much more stable, self-confident and disciplined, and much less given to volatile swings of mood from extreme radicalism to passive resignation than the weaker sections of the working class (or the intelligentsia).

Given its roots in the industrial working class, Solidarity from the beginning contained a very high proportion of employees from the large factories who had a background in the PZPR, the SZMP (the Polish Komsomol), and as departmental officials or workplace delegates in the official trade unions. An estimate by a Gdansk Solidarity leader in December 1980 put the proportion of regional activists of Solidarity who were in the PZPR at about 50%. Amongst manual workers in the PZPR, the bulk of them seem to have devoted their energies to Solidarity activity rather than the internal struggle within the PZPR, without initially resigning from the party in large numbers. A majority of regional activists on regional executives tended to be technicians and white-collar personnel who were often much more active in the internal debates and internal activities of the movement above shopfloor level. On the other hand the manual workers in industry tended to see themselves as more steadfast than the white-collar sections in conflicts with the authorities. ¹³

Patterns of Working-Class Opinion

As in any mass proletarian movement, Solidarity embraced an extremely complex pattern of opinion reflecting all the myriad strata of wage earners in different trades, social and geographical settings, generational conorts and so on. Local histories played a very important role in working-class thinking in relation to the PZPR, the Church, the intelligentsia, and the state administration. Yet the preponderance of the big industrial plants in each region and the preponderance of the ten main industrial regions in the national thinking of the movement makes it possible to make some general statements about the dominant trend of working-class opinion within the movement, for it was this trend that tended to assert itself in the demands around which Solidarity as a whole struggled during its sixteen months of existence.

Although for large numbers of wage earners economic issues and grievances remained a central concern, the weight of the skilled industrial workers ensured that after August, particularly as the scale of the economic crisis was revealed, Solidarity limited its purely economic demands drastically and was ready to compromise on economic points already won in the Gdansk Agreements. Furthermore, there was a strong sense of the importance of using the strike weapon sparingly because of

¹³ With the exception of Karol Modzelewski in Wroclaw and Zbigniew Kowalewski in Lodx, the number of former political oppositionists who became prominent in the leadership of Solidarity's regional organizations was very small, except in Warsaw and Gdansk. Although former oppositionists did come to exert influence as advisers (especially in Solidarity's press organs), the working-class membership was generally extremely wary of involvement with any of the various organized groups such as Koa on the grounds that they did not wish to have any political line 'imposed on them from the outside'—whether by the PEPR or anyone else.

its economic consequences. Thus the number of working hours lost through strikes had no significant impact on the economy. There was, indeed, a growing awareness of the need for the workers to accept some cuts in living standards in order to try to surmount the crisis.

But such economic restraint only sharpened the industrial workers' fiercely egalitarian thrust against social differences, privilege, waste and corruption. They opposed the dollar shops and black markets, and they favoured rationing rather than free-floating prices. There was strong opposition to unemployment and a merciless assault on managerial perks and privileges which are on the whole taken for granted by workers under capitalism. Clubs for management personnel, leisure centres for party officials, private clinics for the police or party functionaries, new conference centres for exclusive party use, company cars, the use of company materials for building private villas, the acceptance of 'commissions' by managers buying equipment from the West, the payment of everybody from football teams to party officials out of company funds, the unequal distribution of housing and of coupons for buying cars, the distribution of prizes for mentorious work according to political or clique loyalties—all these became the object of merciless attack and of strikes involving demands for the sacking of officials. It was part of a wider thrust for public property to be firmly under public control and for resources to be allocated according to efficient work and according to need.14

The political thinking of the industrial workers underwent profound changes during the course of Solidarity's legal existence, but it is important to define the membership's standpoint in Solidarity's first months of existence. The most fundamental political idea was that Solidarity should remain absolutely free from the administrative control of the party—state apparatus. Without such independence workers felt—whether their concerns were economic defence or social and political reform—that all would be lost. This was why the membership was ready to risk everything in an unlimited general strike in October 1980 rather than have the PZPR's 'leading role' written into their statutes.

Another principle was that the party—state authorities had to be brought under some form of public, social control from below if there was to be any chance of overcoming the country's crisis. This did not at all necessarily imply removing the PZPR from power or changing the central political institutions in any structural way, but it did imply radically altering the way these institutions related to the mass of the population. In the first phase of Solidarity's existence this control from below involved largely a negative power of veto over decisions that the government took which the workers considered to be against their interests. There was a strong reluctance on the part of the membership to

¹⁴ Another very strong belief amongst workers was that the health, safety and social welfare of the working class had been widely ignored by the authorities under Gierek. These issues were a source of bitter resentment, not least because official propagands and legal requirements told an opposite story (Poland, for example had on paper some of the toughest and most comprehensive anti-pollution laws). In the late 1970s Poland had the second highest incidence of ris in Europe and in 1976, according to government figures one in four workers worked in unhealthy conditions.

allow Solidarity to get drawn into participatory or co-responsibility schemes, either at the level of enterprise or government decisions. They viewed Solidarity's influence as being exerted through possessing its own press, having direct access to the mass media and being able, in the last resort, to strike in order to press home its views. The membership was also acutely sensitive to the movement being accorded full national status and dignity on a par with all other institutions in the country. All attempts to deny Solidarity this recognition brought massive opposition from its working-class base, which also strongly supported the right of other social groups to win similar organizations and powers.

The most important and problematic area of working-class political thought concerned its conception of Solidarity itself. The August strikes and Gdansk Agreements had formally given birth to a purely trade-union body. This formal definition governed membership requirements: any employee in the nationalized sector of the economy, regardless of ideology, could join. Yet the actual role widely ascribed to the union by workers even while Solidarity was merely defending the Gdansk Agreements went far beyond merely looking after the socio-economic interests of employees. They saw it, rightly, as the main driving force behind general political reform. Furthermore, the union's organizational structure, which placed a premium on working-class unity, underlined this class-political role. Yet in the consciousness of workers, politics was almost totally identified with the activities of the PZPR and, thus, there was a tendency to reject any idea of Solidarity being transformed into a political movement or party based on a political programme. Yet, to add a further dimension, Solidarity grew to such scope that for many workers it was not simply a party or a union, but the corporate expression of the entire urban population of the country—an institution expressing, so to speak, the popular will, or what Western Marxists would call a soviet-type body. In face of the evidently non-representative character of the political system, the all-embracing structure of Solidarity around elected regional assemblies reinforced a vision of the movement as something little short of being an alternative system of national state authority.

Solidarity's Ideological Horizons

This leads us to some consideration of the more general ideological currents within the working class: its attitudes towards socialism, capitalism and the international order. Such a survey is especially difficult in a situation where there were no substantial organized political currents, where there was a powerful impulse to suppress ideological differences for the sake of political unity, and where political and international conditions led to a good deal of care being taken over the repercussions of general ideological statements. Nevertheless, certain points can be established. For example, although at no time during its existence did Solidarity declare itself formally to be a socialist union or movement, evidence from both opinion polls and from talking to Solidarity activists indicates a general readiness amongst workers to support not only socialist values but also the idea of a socialist state. Yet there was no sign of workers vigorously claiming socialism as their own against the PZPR leadership. Nor were the classic socialist symbols—the red flag, socialist songs, and so on embraced by the movement. Instead,

the movement's symbols and rituals were drawn from three sources: previous postwar upsurges of the Polish working class (Poznan, the Baltic 1976, August 1980 itself); pre-1944 Polish national traditions; and the Catholic Church. 15

The central reason why Solidarity did not embrace a socialist ideological commitment lay in its evolving relationship with the PZPR and in the way in which that party had successfully appropriated the terminology of socialism. The birth of Solidarity ipso facto signified that the Polish workers were no longer putting their faith in one wing of the PZPR leadership to carry the country out of a crisis created by another wing of the party. This meant that there was no strand within the PZPR's own tradition which the workers could make their own, as there previously had been, for example, with the Gomulkist tradition as it was perceived by the working class in 1956. At the same time, the regime's propaganda hammered home the iron link between the economic and social basis of socialism and the PZPR's monopolistic supremacy over society. From the cradle to the grave Polish workers were taught-by Western radio stations as well as by the official media—that socialism and the party monopoly were inextricable: you could not have one without the other. Given that the PZPR leaders were unable from mid-August 1980 onwards to justify their monopoly by reference to working-class consentas Solidarity effortlessly established its hegemony—the integral link supposedly existing between the party monopoly and the very existence of socialism became a vital ideological bastion for the authorities to defend. (An attempt by one of the expert advisers to the Gdansk strike committee, Jadwiga Staniszkis, to substitute a non-institutional, socioeconomic definition of socialism for the formula about the party's 'leading role' was repudiated by the other experts who carried the day with the strike committee.)

Neither did the workers possess any living alternative socialist political tradition to that of the PZPR. A good deal of work was done by intellectuals to disinter the traditions of the Polish Socialist Party, but this made little impact on a working class with no living PPS tradition. Nor, finally, was there any strong socialist political tradition outside the PZPR within the Polish intelligentsia. 1968 had put paid to 'revisionism' as a vital theoretical force within the intelligentsia, giving way either to Catholic nationalist trends expressed in such groups as ROPCIO, the RPN, Young Poland or the Macierewicz wing of KOR, or to Catholic liberal or social-democratic liberal trends such as the current represented by Mazowiecki in the KIKS or the Kuron-Michnik wing of the KOR. 16

¹⁵ There was also to a considerable degree an identification with the trade-union movements of Western Europe, one which expressed itself in the many local links established between Solidarity branches and trade-union branches from the West But a purely trade-unionist ideology was not enough to sustain a movement continually involved in general confrontations with the government and threatened with invasion from neighbouring countries

¹⁶ The Kuron-Michnik trend tended to present itself as a purely democratic ideological current with a strong sympathy for Western parliamentary democracy, rather than as a socialist current linked up to any international socialist or working-class tradition. And while appreciating the practical strength of the Polish working class, it did not visualize the working-class movement as having an historical role to play, and indeed tended to decry any suggestions that class distinctions other than those between the elite and society as a whole were of any significance.

Radical socialist trends were very weak and, apart from in Warsaw, Szczecin and Lodz, had almost no contact with Solidarity's membership.

This near-void in the field of socialist ideological alternatives to Stalinism presented the workers with a choice between generating a new ideological tradition and turning towards pre-war nationalist traditions still present within the Catholic Church and the population at large, and indeed within the state bureaucracy in the form of Polish equivalents of Ceausescism. As the political crisis deepened a large section of Solidarity's working-class membership turned from militant trade unionism towards a form of what might be called anarcho-syndicalism, essentially derived from the structure of Solidarity itself as an organization embracing the overwhelming majority of wage-earners, stressing their unity as a class and counterposing themselves to a single huge political party. This produced a vision of a self-managed republic in the hands of the producers, organized through their union without the need for parties, running an egalitarian society and a nationalized urban economy. This indeed was the vision expressed within the programme adopted at the Solidarity Congress in October 1981. 17

To this vision was married one strand of Polish nationalism, the romantic, revolutionary-insurrectionary nationalism of the nineteenth-century aristocracy, the Szlachta. The workers took over, in many ways, the aristocracy's self-image as the heroic leading class of the nation. In this way they interpreted their struggle to bring about basic change in the teeth of evident opposition from the Soviet leadership. This strand of nationalism had indeed been present within the early Polish socialist movement, bringing out the wrath of Rosa Luxemburg who was in turn repudiated by Lenin for her failure to grasp the difference between progressive and reactionary nationalism.

Against this strand of nationalist ideology was set the nationalism of the inter-war Polish bourgeoisie and Catholic Church: the integral nationalism of Dmowski and National Democracy with its central emphasis on ethnic purity and anti-semitism; its corporatist rejection of classes and class conflict; its reactionary social philosophy; its hatred of political radicalism of any sort; and its advocacy of organic change combined with authoritarian order and unity. This strand of nationalism continued to be strongly present in some sections of the Church and also within the state bureaucracy. It was to be used to some considerable effect as a weapon against the social and political aspirations of the working class during the crisis. And in the context of Solidarity's defeats in the late autumn of 1981 a small minority within the industrial working class turned in despair towards such ideas, assisted in this direction by the black anti-semitic propaganda spread by agencies controlled by the political police. But such ideas were born of defeat and a search for alternatives to Solidarity and mass working-class struggle. They were the product of the movement's incipient disintegration, not of its development. The industrial workers in Solidarity identified themselves certainly with the Polish eagle, but it was eagle an in the service of popular, working-class

¹⁷ Labour Focus, V, 1-2, contains the full English translation of Solidarity's Programme

sovereignty, with the crown removed. And as for a return to capitalism, so the joke went, nobody was in favour of returning the Lenin Shipyard to the Lenin family.

III. Forces and Strategies

The Gdansk Agreements and rise of Solidarity as a multi-million strong social movement placed one fundamental issue before all social and political forces involved in the Polish crisis: how, if at all, was this movement to be integrated into a political and social structure shaped up till then by the management of all public life by the PZPR? We will try to very briefly summarize the stance on this issue of some of the other key actors in the drama: the Soviet leadership, the PZPR and state leaderships, the Church hierarchy, and the main reformist currents within the politically active sections of the intelligentsia, especially the Catholic intelligentsia.

The CPSU Leadership

The Soviet leadership had two central concerns following the August events: a military-security requirement dictated by Poland's absolutely pivotal position in the ussa's European defences; and a political-security requirement dictated by the need to ensure that the Polish 'disease' didn't spread to other Warsaw Pact countries, including the USSR itself. The solution to both these problems lay, for the Soviet leadership, in the full restoration of party-state control over the Polish population and this in turn required ending trade-union independence. Pravda spelt this out in unequivocal terms on 25 September, the day after Solidarity had applied for legal registration. The article stated that 'independent unions' were a violation of 'Leninist principles' and a 'bourgeois provocation' and insisted that 'trade unions can only fulfil their tasks in close collaboration with and under the direct leadership of the party'. Secondly, the Soviet leadership strongly opposed any changes in the ideological and organizational principles of the PZPR itself—thus the party should not achieve its ascendancy by a Czechoslovak-style move towards inner-party pluralism that would enable the impulses from Solidarity's base to flow freely into party organizations. Thirdly, the binding together of the PZPR and the working class could not, in Soviet opinion, be achieved by giving a new political role to the Church hierarchy, making the PZPR dependent on the Church to integrate the workers.

To achieve its strategic task of resubordinating the Polish working class, the PZPR leadership was to be allowed, in Soviet eyes, some tactical flexibility over methods and timing (more, at least, than either the CPCZ or the SED leaders felt happy with). But the direction of these tactics was what mattered: was the PZPR elite fighting to subordinate Solidarity or was it seeking to reconcile itself to Solidarity, succumbing to the enormous pressure from the party rank and file to cooperate with Solidarity? This was the cardinal question for the CPSU leadership throughout the crisis. And when it became convinced that the PZPR as a political apparatus was incapable of pursuing this struggle to victory, it was prepared, however reluctantly, to seek other solutions.

The PZPR and State Leaderships

Bourgeois literature tends, for obvious reasons, to equate the ruling Communist Party—a mass political apparatus—with the professional bureaucracy of the state and party. But by conflating the two it is impossible to make sense of the real political dynamics of the Polish crisis. In terms of membership the PZPR embraced some three million people at the start of the crisis, located in every sphere of social life, including over a million-and-a-quarter workers. The PZPR's own professional bureaucracy numbered only about 10,000 officials, the bulk of whom were involved in seeking to manage the activity of the mass membership in all spheres of life. There were then about a million state officials, mostly within the PZPR but largely involved in very different activity from politics proper: they were rather involved in public administration through the ministries, and provincial state bodies, in the internal security apparatus, in the army, and judiciary, and so on. The task of the central party bodies was to reconcile all these functions and personnel through furnishing them with an overall, policy line. In seeking to do so, the politburo and CC members tended to reflect very different social and political trends and pressures from the different quarters.

Two types of fissures revealed themselves sharply in what might be called the sociology of the PZPR during the crisis: First, there was that between the mass membership of the party and the state bureaucracy and much of the party bureaucracy. Secondly, there was a deep-going struggle between the different functional elements of the state apparatus and a tendency for each of them to try to free themselves from the central political control of the PZPR apparatus leaderships.

The split between the state bureaucracy and the party membership can be briefly summarized. The former social stratum was vividly described in a report by critical Polish sociologists before the August events as 'what might be called the socialist middle classes or a socialist petit bourgeoisie. They have unquestionable influence on the party and government apparatuses, the greater part of which are staffed by these middle classes. Do they have an interest in common with the working classes? Absolutely not. They grow richer and richer but still they are not as rich as they would like. They are hampered by the remnants of socialist phraseology at the top...and socialist ideology at the bottom....'18 Their general reaction to Solidarity was one of fear and horror. As for the party membership, its main thrust was to co-operate with Solidarity (indeed, join it), and to struggle to bring this state bureaucracy under effective democratic party control. For this purpose it sought to bring massive pressure to bear on the PZPR leadership to gain a politburo majority that reflected its will. Insofar as the political elite wished to govern the country principally through the PZPR as a mass force, it had to bend to this rank-and-file pressure or risk a split, if not a collapse of the mass party.

¹⁸ The report by DIP (the Experience and the Future' Group) is published in English in *Poland: The State of the Republic*, Michael Vale (ed.), London 1982. The quotation is from p. 65.

Intertwined with this conflict was the institutional struggle within the different functional components of the state and the efforts by powerful institutional groups to break free from control by the given PZPR leadership. Each institution, so to speak, generated its own institutional interests and programme and they were not bound together by any class principle of social organization such as private capitalist property and its defence, which binds together state bureaucracies in the West. Thus while the party apparatus had an interest in preserving the planned economy, this was far less clear for, say, the judiciary; and while the central party apparatus was pre-occupied with responding to political pressures from the rank and file of the party, this was by no means the main pre-occupation of the officer corps of the military. Eventually, as both Moscow and a large part of the state bureaucracy lost confidence in the efficacy of the mass party as the key apparatus of rule, a coalition of forces within the state machine (all of whom, of course, were party members) pushed the civilian party apparatus to one side and opted for other means of government, at least temporarily.

But for the moment we will concentrate upon summarizing the main political currents within the PZPR central Committee as they began to crystalize in the late autumn of 1980 in the party leadership's efforts to re-unite and assert its authority over the PZPR membership and the state machine.

(a) The Kania-Barcikowski Grouping: Kania, the new first secretary, who immediately raised the slogan of 'Socialist Renewal', on 8 September offered the membership the promise of a new PZPR Congress and sanctioned secret ballot elections for executive positions in the party. He supported a purge of corrupt officials, and backed the removal of unpopular officials. His political line began with the affirmation that the August strikes 'were not directed against socialism but against its distortions', went on to sanction party members joining Solidarity but called for the condemnation of 'anti-socialist forces' within and around the union. He repudiated the use of force to resolve conflicts, but did not advance any programme of political reform. Instead he offered a style of political management through which the party's 'leading role' would be assured, a style which was, in truth, a continuation of Gierek's own style of conflict resolution in the late 1970s: a pluralistic corporatism with the party apparatus as the sole body for harmonizing all the various particular interests in society. Those who sought to replace this corporatist consensus with adversary politics were branded as anti-national extremists. In this framework, the Church was placed firmly within the range of healthy forces, while Solidarity was partly in, partly out. The unacceptable forces were depicted as the anti-socialist intellectuals while the workers were presented as the healthy force. (In reality, of course, it was the industrial workers' militant syndicalism that was the real source of adversary politics, but the Kania group sought to displace the origin of conflict to KOR and other non-working-class political groups.) Beyond this, in the field of actual policy, Kania's politics was 'centrist', moving between the pressures from the Soviet leadership and those from social forces below.

(b) Olszowski, Grabski, Zabinski: This was less a stable group than a

trend, differing from Kania in two respects. First it wanted a more militant, adversarial style of politics to be pursued by the PZPR, as against Kania's corporatism. It wanted a greater distance from the Church, a greater emphasis on Marxist-Leninist ideological struggle against counterrevolution, a sharper polarization to subordinate Solidarity, and an effort to instil in the ranks a 'will to win'. Secondly, and in this context, it was far less attached to the central plan than Kania and favoured decentralization and marketization of the economy along with plant-level 'workers' self-management⁵. For this current, the PZPR could afford to lose a big part of its working-class base and become a slimmed-down, militant, anti-clerical but also technocratic and managerial force.

- (c) Fiszbach and Popular Consent: This trend, smaller and less influential on the CC than the others found its clearest expression in the Gdansk provincial secretary, Fiszbach. It favoured the party seeking to establish a real mechanism of popular consent and legitimation within the political system and it favoured strategic co-operation with Solidarity and its working-class base. In this way the PZPR would establish its 'leading role' rather as the Czechoslovak party had done but with greater emphasis on the link with the independent union. This was the one trend within the leadership that was unacceptable on principle to the CPSU leadership.
- (d) The Bonapartist Role and Moczar: this trend wanted to reconstruct the political system around a 'strong' nationalist leader cast in a Bonapartist role. Combining populism with authoritarianism this current wished to play down official Marxism-Leninism and to stress a nationalist drive for discipline, unity, the workers' welfare and puritan morality. Partisan General Moczar, aided by his newly promoted (or re-promoted, after being in the doldrums during the Gierek years) supporters, offered himself to the nation in this role up until the spring of 1981. But in the eyes of the intelligentsia, with vivid memories of his activities in 1967–68, ¹⁹ he was disqualified from playing this part. The role was thus eventually assumed by another figure with better military credentials and a less tainted political record: Defence Minister and Army Commander-in-Chief General Jaruzelski. Like Moczar, Jaruzelski was to ally himself initially with the Kania group, but his institutional base lay right outside the PZPR civilian political apparatus.

The Church and the Catholic Intelligentsia

The Church was a huge institutional structure which for twenty-five years had been leading a highly routinized existence within the Republic under the autocratic leadership of Cardinal Wyszynski. With 19,913 priests in 1978, 447 monasteries, 2,349 convents, 48 seminaries, a fully fledged Catholic University and a university-level Theological Academy in Warsaw, about 20,000 centres of religious instruction and 57 Catholic periodicals—with all this, the Polish episcopate, far from being a militant centre of 'anti-socialist counter-revolutionary mobilization', was a settled, conservative and prosperous establishment without any active project for upsetting the status quo.

¹⁹ Moczar at that time used anti-temitian and chauvinism in a repressive drive against the cultural intelligentsia as part of this factional campaign within the PEPR.

In Poland's successive political crises, the episcopate had always proved its loyalty by appealing for calm and order in the cities, its message on social questions was a mixture of calls for sober hard work and respect for the family coupled with denunciations of worldly, secular (and pro-Western) life-styles, as well as a strong appeal for Poles to love their country and build up its resources. There was no trace of radical democratic ideology within the episcopate. Wysznski was fiercely independent of Rome and he comforted his priests with the thought that the Church had survived for one thousand years and would continue to flourish for another millennium provided they kept out of politics and left everything of that sort to the primate and central church bureaucracy. Not for nothing did Gierek strongly support Wyszynski when the Vatican had to decide whether the primate could stay on after his seventy-fifth birthday. In return for this posture, the episcopate was guaranteed that there would be no forced collectivization of agriculture and it was given substantial institutional freedom in the religious sphere. The overwhelming bulk of Church funds came from congregations' contributions and payments for births, marriages and funerals, though it also gained some income from agriculture and the Vatican.

All of this produced a strong tendency within the episcopate towards what the KOR activist Adam Michnik has called 'Paxization'—in other words towards full integration into the existing political structure of the state. This current strongly influenced, and influences, the central church bureaucracy including such figures as Glemp (to succeed Wyszynski in the summer of 1981), Bishop Dabrowski (the secretary to the episcopate), Abbot Orszulik (the episcopal spokesperson), Bishops Modzelewski of Warsaw, Kaczmarek of Gdansk, and so on. Picked by Wyszynski these men have throughout the crisis exercised decisive sway within the domestic Polish Church.

For this current, Solidarity's rise presented both a powerful potential threat and a possible, though dangerous opportunity. Solidarity could have become a rival centre of gravity and of authority for the urban masses outside the orbit of the PZPR. It was also potentially ideologically subversive within the Church, thanks to its radical democratic and egalitarian thrust. And the Church leadership feared Solidarity might provoke a counter-revolution or Soviet invasion that could sweep away the Church's own institutional rights. Wyszynski evolved a series of objectives for the hierarchy to meet this situation. First, the Church would present itself as a mediator between the party leadership and Solidarity, thus occupying a nationally unifying supra-political position. Secondly, Solidarity should confine itself to strictly economic issues, should not meddle in politics and should remove such secular political groups as KOR from positions of influence. If Solidarity had some political grievances it could approach the primate to intercede with the authorities. Thirdly, the Church's key base, the peasantry, was pressing for its own Rural Solidarity and Wyszynski felt constrained to champion this cause and thus assure the Church firm control over that movement. Fourthly, the Church should try to spread its ideological influence within the urban popular movement through taking great pains to give the movement religious symbols. And finally, Wyszynski entertained the idea that the Church might, in addition to Rural Solidarity, acquire a new

political instrument through which to further entrench into influence. This would have involved merging the existing pro-regime Catholic groups—Pax, OdiSS, the Christian Social Association, Neo-Znak, and so on—with other independent Catholic forces into a new Christian party within the National Front and the Sejm. The Cardinal unsuccessfully pursued this idea unofficially both with the government and with such groups as Pax.

Two other currents were visible within the Church. The most important of these was represented by the Pope himself. Far less nervous of the popular movement than Wyszynski, the Pope was interested in cooperating with and hegemonizing its secular forces. Compared to Wyszynski he downplayed traditional Polish nationalism and instead encouraged the movement to look to the Western bourgeois states as its home. While strongly opposing impulses within the working-class movement towards political confrontation, the Pope and his allies in the hierarchy were interested in an ideological confrontation between urban populist Catholicism and the PZPR. This involved encouraging a much more dynamic and combative thrust within the working class than Wyszynski's mixture of economism and traditionalist piety. The Pope's close co-thinkers within the hierarchy itself were remarkably small in number-among them Archbishop Macharski of Cracow and the extremely energetic philosopher, Abbot Tischner. His support came more from the Catholic liberal intelligentsia in the KIKS, the Znak group and the Catholic weekly, Tygodnik Powszechny.

But if such forces played a subordinate political role, their intellectual influence was substantial. Despite political rivalry and differences of tactical nuance, their objectives were similar to those of the Kuron-Michnik wing of the KOR: de facto political pluralism and a greatly reduced role and power for the PZPR. The party would retain control of the army, police, foreign policy, etc., but through plant self-management plus the marketization of the economy, economic regulation would be removed from the control of the PZPR apparatus. The judiciary also would become independent and while censorship would remain it would be limited and there would be genuine pluralism in the media. Through marketization and self-management, the workers would face austerity. Solidarity would be not simply a trade union but a broader 'social movement'. It would not challenge for power but would be de facto an indispensible political factor of the first order which any PZPR government would have to cooperate with. This was the programme of the so-called 'self-limiting revolution' or 'New Evolutionism' which united a wide spectrum of opinion stretching from the agnostic Kuron to close collaborators of the Pope.

The third trend of opinion within the Church was what might be described as the *endseya* current—reactionary Catholic anti-Communist nationalism of an anti-semitic and strongly authoritarian character. This had been the strongest trend within the Church in the prewar period. As a political trend within the episcopate it was largely extinguished in the 1950s—a good example of the political transformation of that time was Bishop Kaczmarek of Gdansk—but some elements amongst both priests and laity still subscribed to such thinking in the late 1970s, together with some elements of the state bureaucracy itself. Figures like Andrzej Czuma

from Ropcio, Leszek Moczulski, the leader of RPN and other similar groups entertained hopes of liquidating the Communists and establishing a new authoritarian regime embodying the 'true Polish ethnic spirit'. They wished to restore the past and strongly identified with a thousand years of Catholicism. Throughout the crisis they maintained a shadowy, semi-clandestine existence, operating largely on the fringes of Solidarity and their political orientation involved extreme tactical moderation, and hostility to the social militancy of Solidarity, with a perspective of infiltration of influential institutions and the organization of networks of cadres. They lacked unity and leadership, but in the context of defeats and demoralization within the working class in the late autumn of 1981, one of these groups, the RPN, started to pick up some following amongst a significant minority of workers in some cities.

IV Solidarity's Struggle for Survival

Phase One: A Failed Party Offensive and its Consequences

The critical political events of the autumn of 1980 were the emergence of Solidarity as a class-wide organization with a structure that emphasized class unity and the failure of the party-state authorities' attempt to polarize society around the issue of Solidarity's political subordination to the PZPR. This confrontation took the form of a battle over whether the movement's statutes should affirm the party's leading role. The authorities tried to make this a condition for Solidarity's legal registration. In doing so they were evidently reflecting an understanding between the PZPR and CPSU leaderships. Solidarity's regional organizations overwhelmingly rejected this proposition and rallied to the call for an unlimited general strike rather than submit to a demand that seemed to destroy the union's autonomy. The Solidarity leadership suggested a compromise putting the section of the Gdansk agreements that recognized the party's leading role in society as an appendix to the statutes, but this was initially rejected by the authorities. Only after Kania flew to Moscow on 30 October, when it was clear that Solidarity could carry out its threatened strike, and gained the Soviet politburo's approval for Solidarity's suggested compromise, was the domestic crisis defused. Solidarity was legally registered on 10 November, almost two months after it was founded.

The internal compromise was to swiftly produce an external crisis as the Czechoslovak and DDR governments, along with a powerful segment of the Soviet elite, interpreted the compromise as a capitulation on the part of the PZPR, necessitating military intervention. This campaign for an invasion was fuelled by sections of the Polish state apparatus in some regions who were banking on the swift, surgical removal of Solidarity from the scene. Within the Soviet leadership, the military commanders and political directorates of Soviet ground forces in Europe seem to have been strongly supporting the campaign, presumably because of worries about Soviet communications with the front line in the DDR. Warsaw Pact forces were mobilized along Poland's frontiers in late November, but the majority within the Soviet politburo allegedly repudiated invasion and called a Warsaw Pact summit meeting at the start of December to lay down alternative guidelines for restoring control over the domestic

Polish situation. (Subsequently, between 2 December and 16 January there was a sweeping reorganization of Soviet military commanders, involving the transfer of the C-in-C Soviet Ground forces, the Chief of the Political Directorate of Soviet Ground forces, the C-in-Cs of Soviet forces in the DDR, Czechoslovakia, Belorussia and the Baltic states as well as the Chiefs of the political directorates in the DDR and the Baltic.)²⁰

Throughout these autumn events, the Solidarity leadership was struggling to maintain the movement within strictly trade-unionist limits. Walesa repeatedly declared that Solidarity was not concerned with political questions and that even on trade-union questions the movement could not operate like a militant West European movement. Walesa's most influential adviser at this time, the Catholic liberal Mazowiecki, was striving, as he put it, to 'create a trade-unionist ideology' for the movement. During the Narozniak affair in Warsaw in late November, when workers in the big factories were threatening a general strike against the activities of the political police, Kuron and Walesa intervened heavily, and in the end successfully, to block such action.

This orientation was strongly re-enforced by the episcopate, which echoed the PZPR's appeals for national unity and in December called upon the population in unprecedented terms to repudiate 'irresponsible extremists' such as the KOR and KPN and to support Poland's existing state structure. What might be called a corporatist national consensus emerged strongly during Christmas. The Solidarity leadership called for and achieved a moratorium on all strikes until 15 January, the commemoration ceremonies for the dead of 1970 were turned into extraordinary spectacles of national unity and reconciliation between Solidarity and the government, presided over by the episcopate.

Phase Two: A Second Party Offensive

The Christmas consensus rapidly disintegrated at the start of January. After the Moscow summit, there was a notable hardening of the government's positions in the various negotiations over implementing the specific clauses of the Gdansk Agreements, many of whose provisions should have come into force on 1 January. This hardening was noticeable on two issues especially which were, for different reasons, crucial: the granting of free Saturdays, and the legalization of Rural Solidarity. On the legalization of Rural Solidarity, a new union law already agreed between the government and Solidarity provided for the right of such a peasant union. But it was not issued by the government, apparently because of Soviet objections. On the free Saturday issue, the Solidarity leadership was ready, because of the economic crisis, to retreat from the Gdansk Agreements, and agree to three Saturdays off in the month. But the PZPR leadership insisted upon only two free Saturdays. This was a long standing grievance amongst Polish workers who remembered Gierek's long past promises of a five-day week and could see both Czech and DDR workers already enjoying such rights. The issue raised even more feeling given the binding promise of a five-day week in the August

²⁰ See R D. Anderson, 'Soviet Decision-Making in Poland', Problems of Communication (March—April 1982)

Agreements. A test of strength was inevitable, and was turned by Olszowski into a drive to assert, for the second time, the PZPR's ascendancy over Solidarity. The episcopate and Walesa sought to accept the government's terms on free Saturdays, and throughout the first four months of 1981 Cardinal Wyszynski sought to pressurize the Solidarity leadership to concentrate its efforts on one question: the legalization of Rural Solidarity. But such pressure was not successful. Solidarity struck twice, and when, on 24 January it pulled out between 75% and 95% of workers in the large plants (according to the official news agency PAP), the government moved towards a compromise more or less along the lines of Solidarity's original proposals. Once again, in the eyes of Poland's neighbouring governments, the PZPR leadership had failed to assert its authority.

Meanwhile, serious tensions were appearing within Solidarity itself. The Gdansk adviser Bogdan Borusewicz, pointed to one of their sources in an interview with the official press in December: 'At this moment people expect more from us than we can possibly do. Normally, society focuses on the party. In Poland nowadays, however, society gathers around the free trade unions. That's a bad thing. Thus there is an increasing necessity to formulate a political programme. It would be good if the party took the lead and removed people's social expectations from our shoulders. But will it do so now? In the eyes of the people, the new trade unions should do everything: they should fulfil the role of trade unions, participate in the administration of the country, be a political party and act as a militia, that is, detain drunkards and thieves, they should teach morals—and that's a great problem for us....'²¹

Solidarity's rise had brought millions of people into open political life for the first time and the consciousness of these newly awakened masses was extremely difficult for the Solidarity leadership, committed at this time to a purely trade-unionist posture, to handle. On one side this consciousness was expressed in vast numbers of specific grievances: in individual regions it was possible for literally thousands of isolated demands to be assembled. On the other side, it was expressed in terms of what might be called a fundamentalist attachment to various absolute values: freedom, the nation, democracy, equality, unity, and so on. Kuron described the consequences of this type of consciousness in pointing out that 'when any conflict arises between Solidarity and the government, no matter on what question, we always get tremendous support. On the other hand, any agreement, however favourable to the union it may be, arouses dissatisfaction, or—to use a perhaps better word—disappointment among the people.'22

This popular consciousness has been mistaken by some on the left as a revolutionary consciousness. ²³ This has a superficial appearance of truth in the sense that these masses yearned for a swift, total solution to all their problems. But in a deeper sense it was very far from being a revolutionary political consciousness. It did not at all express confidence in their own

²¹ Labour Focus, IV, 4-6, p. 15

²² Spage interview (15.12 80)

²³ See Colin Barker and Kara Weber, Solidarnoss from Gdansh to Military Repression, 18 Publications, London 1982.

strength in collective action, far less a will to power or any programmatic unity over popular objectives. Indeed this popular mood was highly volatile, liable to swing between fervent confidence in supporting the almost miraculous powers of Lech Walesa to a loss of hope for any change and a drift into a rejection of collective action in the political field.

In the large industrial plants and amongst the skilled workers, on the other hand, there was both a more pragmatic conception of politics, as being a struggle to defend definite social interests and achieve particular goals, together with a strong sense of their collective strength. By the early months of 1981, these workers had developed what might be called an attitude of political syndicalism to achieve the necessary reforms. They did not believe that the reforms would be achieved by waiting and trusting the good will of the government, but they did believe the government would grant them under pressure from below. As to the reforms that were necessary, these were at this time overwhelmingly limited to implementation of the Gdansk Agreements as the industrial workers understood them, above all freedom of action for Solidarity, an effective voice of the movement in the mass media, and a clear readiness on the part of the government to cooperate with Solidarity and respect the opinion of the workers. Finally and crucially, there was a growing awareness of the scale of the economic crisis and of the need for austerity. but an equally strong insistence that any austerity programme had to be policed by the workers' trusted leaders to safeguard their social and political interests. As to how this was to be done was not yet clear.

Against this background, during January and February, a mass of local struggles on a variety of issues broke out while the movement's main centres concentrated on the issue of free Saturdays. The national leadership of Solidarity was overwhelmingly involved in rushing from one dispute to another, seeking to rein in the movement toward purely trade-unionist objectives, while leaving it up to the government to unveil a programme of political reform and hoping by its moderation to strengthen the hand of the reform-minded elements in the government. Their model was not that of political syndicalism but rather what might be described as corporatist trade unionism, with Solidarity retaining complete independence from the PZPR but operating a social contract with the government in the 'national interest'.

These different layers of thinking were beginning to produce strains and tensions within Solidarity. In the less industrial regions, the local leaderships, under intense pressure from their mass base on a wide range of issues, were being pushed into local struggles. In Solidarity's main centres, tensions where being channelled outwards towards frustration with what was seen as the national leadership's lack of vigour and militancy, while on the national leadership itself an incipient split was developing between those favouring militant syndicalism and Walesa and his advisers' more corporatist approach, itself in line with the perspective held by the Church hierarchy. Meanwhile, there was a tendency for Walesa himself to rise above the constituted committees, resting on the growing popular confidence in his supposed powers, amounting almost to a cult, particularly outside the movement's main industrial bastions.

Phase Three: The Bydogazcz Crisis

The turmoil of January and the first half of February was followed by the sudden and unexpected appointment of military Commander-in-Chief General Jaruzelski as Prime Minister on 10 February. While Walesa swiftly welcomed the appointment, Jaruzelski moved to settle outstanding conflicts and calm prevailed in Poland as the 26th Congress of the CPSU took place in Moscow at the end of the month.

Jaruzelski's appointment must be seen against the background both of the Soviet leadership's rejection of invasion as a method of resolving the crisis, and of the demonstrative failure of the PZPR leadership's two efforts to establish its ascendancy over Solidarity through political polarization (the statutes and the free Saturdays campaigns). After the Moscow summit, Warsaw Pact attention shifted to Poland's internal security forces and the Pact's Commander-in-Chief Marshal Kulikov arrived in Warsaw on 14 January 'on a fact finding mission to establish the loyalty of Poland's armed forces'. ²⁴ From this time, serious preparations were underway to establish the option of an internal crackdown against Solidarity. General Jaruzelski's elevation made it possible for such plans to go ahead outside the framework of the PZPR's civilian apparatus and utilizing the lines of communication of the Warsaw Pact military structure rather than Central Committee links.

Secondly, Jaruzelski's appointment and the subsequent infusion of other military personnel into government positions was designed to help break the real circuit of the political process that had led to the failure of the PZPR's leadership's political offensives. This circuit had not at all involved government retreat under the pressure of economic losses from strikes or under the pressure of the threat of the strikes becoming insurrectionary. It had involved the swing of the PZPR's base organizations onto Solidarity's side on both the statutes and the free Saturdays and the consequent build up of intolerable political pressures on the Central Committee of the PZPR. The officer corps of the army was under no such civilian political pressures, was the most socially conservative wing of the apparatus and could be hoped to stand firm in a confrontation.

The great irony of Jaruzelski's appointment was that in popular consciousness he was seen as being more amenable to the aspirations of the masses than the PZPR's civilian apparatus. Jaruzelski was presented as a 'non-political', patriotic and strong military-leader, above what was seen as the sordid infighting of PZPR factions. He took over the role to which Moczar had aspired, and the official media was not squeamish in surrounding him with the aura of traditional Polish military nationalism and evoking the mantle of Pilsudski (even to the point of naming workplaces after the prewar dictator). Jaruzelski avoided the phraseology of Marxism and presented himself as the standard-bearer of national welfare, national unity and national independence. His programme was presented as a combination of order and reform. He thus appealed

²⁴ See Leslie Collitt in *The France I Times* (15.1 83). *The Economic Bulletin East-West*, edited for Western bankers by Jan Szoubek, reported in the Spring that sources in Moscow spoke of preparations for a military coup in Poland

precisely to the fundamentalist and only semi-political values of broad masses of the population that we spoke of earlier. And as his lieutenant he brought in as Deputy Prime Minister, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, a reformist journalist with no background in the PZPR apparatus (and no base there either), who exhibited a political style that was Jaruzelski's polar opposite: politics as complete relativism, as pure tactics as infinitely flexible manoeuvre at the top in the cause of compromise and reform—realpolitik in a good cause.

But the real accompaniment of these governmental changes was the Bydgoszcz crisis, a dramatic provocation marking the replacement of the party apparatus by the political police as the initiator of political events. This crisis had been preceded by an important meeting between the Soviet and Polish party leaderships in Moscow on 4 March, at the end of the CPSU Congress. Up to this time, the Soviet line had been that despite problems and anti-socialist forces, Poland was moving towards national renewal and the PZPR had the resources to carry it out. But now the communique said the Soviet leaders were convinced that the PZPR had both the opportunity and the strength to reverse the course of events and to eliminate the peril looming over the socialist achievements of the Polish nation'. This was a new tune.

Then on 19 March, while Kania was on a visit to Budapest and large Warsaw Pact manoeuvres were starting, came the incident that plunged the country into its gravest political crisis until martial law: the beating up of Solidarity leaders in Bydgoszcz. The details of the affair are sufficiently well-known to need no further recounting here. It is important to recognize that the crisis was caused as much by the government's refusal to condemn the attack and expose its causes as by the incident itself. Solidarity's membership treated the affair as a challenge to the movement's existence. For the broad masses, it was a test of Solidarity's credibility as a force for change. At the same time the affair sharply revealed the insufficiency of the Solidarity leadership's established political conceptions.

The leadership quickly agreed five limited, piecemeal demands: the punishment of those responsible for the attack, the legalization of Rural Solidarity, security for union members and the union's right of reply to media attacks on it, full pay for strikers, and the dropping of all charges against those arrested for political offences between 1976 and 1980. At the same time, the KKP (National Coordinating Commission) was thrown into turmoil over the form of action on those demands. At first the majority wanted an immediate, unlimited general strike, but by threatening to split the movement, Walesa and his Catholic advisers won the day for immediate negotiations, then a four hour warning strike on Friday 27 March, then an unlimited general strike from Tuesday 30 March.

In terms of the extremely limited demands involved, an unlimited general strike—that objectively posed the question of power—made little sense. This was the underlying logic of Walesa's position. On the other hand, Solidarity's regional activists and Walesa's opponents on the KKP had logic on their side in feeling that only a basic structural change in the situation like that which had occurred in August 1980 was appropriate.

But they could express this will only in terms of the forms and timing of struggle, without articulating an appropriate structural political objective. They had no equivalent of the August demand for independent trade unions, a demand that bridged the gulf between immediate, partial issues and some all-out struggle for power. And the reason why they lacked such an objective was because of their own self-definition as a trade union which did not and should not possess some overall programmatic objective. ²⁵

In the absence of such a positive programmatic perspective appropriate to the interests of the working class, the Solidarity leadership was under strong pressure to adopt the priorities of the Catholic hierarchy. The Church was strongly opposed to a head-on confrontation for further structural political reform. On 28 March, the Pope sent a message saying that 'voices reaching him from Poland were stressing that working men wanted to work and not to strike'. Wyszynski moved into the centre of the stage as a mediator, moving between meetings with Walesa and Jaruzelski and agreeing with the latter on a peaceful settlement. Walesa himself later explained the Solidarity leadership crisis in the following way: What really happened was that we were in danger of splitting up; splitting away from the Church especially. At times like that you've got to turn back.... But these are all behind-the scenes machinations which will be brought to light by future generations. 26 The key objective of the primate was to use the crisis to gain the legalization of Rural Solidarity, and this indeed was the single substantive outcome of the crisis.

Meanwhile, at the base the crisis brought a thunderous display of popular unity and discipline behind Solidarity. And the salient political feature of this was the great shift of the PZPR's basic organizations. The politburo banned PZPR involvement in the Friday warning strike and the ban was overwhelmingly flouted, with factory PZPR organizations often explicitly placing themselves under the discipline of the strike committees (future politburo member Zofia Grzyb was one of the factory party leaders involved in this). The central committee meeting that weekend was beseiged by pressure from the base as regional conferences of PZPR delegates monitored proceedings around the clock and bombarded the CC with telegrams and resolutions. Only hours before the Tuesday general strike was due to start, Gwiazda appeared on TV to read out an agreement, consisting of general promises from the government and admitting that in Bydgoszcz the 'principles for solving social conflicts by political means' had been violated.

26 See The Book of Lock Walters, Harmondsworth 1982, pp. 192-93.

²⁵ The contrast with August is crucial. On that earlier occasion, the workers had not fought either for piecemeal minimal objectives nor for the general overthrow of the bureaucracy, but rather for the essential intermediate political objective of an independent trade union. This was a demand that was grasped by the mass of working people as both reasonable and necessary, while ensuring, if won, a formidable practical advance for the consciousness and organization of the class. Such an intermediate or transitional political objective was lacking during the Bydgoazex crass. Despite a far more massive national mobilization than in August, as well as the dramatic shift of the PZPA's urban base into the mass movement, Solidarity's leadership was led into a strategic impasse, unable to channel the popular will to defend Solidarity at all costs (something different from a will to conquer state power) into an advance of the scope and organization of popular power.

Amongst the working population in general there was at first relief that the tension was over; amongst Solidarity's activists in the large plants. however, there was outrage at the perceived insufficiency of the agreement. In the longer term, the movement was never again able to rally the overwhelming majority of the population behind its defence. The masses tended to drift in other directions as the economic crisis weighed ever more heavily and as Solidarity did not seem strong enough to resolve their problems. Some began to yearn for a strong government of any sort, others launched into wild-cat action on their own, out of the Solidarity leadership's control. As for the movement's activists, they began to search for more radical political answers to the crisis, moving beyond purely trade-unionist objectives. In the meantime, between April and June, the Solidarity leadership sought to contain pressures from below while the PZPR Congress approached and concentrated upon internal Solidarity affairs—regional elections, preparations for its own Congress and programmatic debate. The locus of political contestation shifted to the internal struggle within the PZPR itself.

Phase Four: The Rise and Fall of the Party Reform Movement

One of the most important features of the whole Solidarity experience was the union leadership's eschewing of any effort to stimulate a mass tendency within the PZPR with a shared reform programme. In 1979, Kuron had forcefully made the case for such an orientation, arguing for a movement of social pressure from below that would then become 'the social base of the grouping within the party whose programme most fully recognized the demands of society'. He went on: 'The problem of whether this type of activity constitutes participation in the game of party factions is not new. But it is naive . . . there isn't any public activity in our country which would not become the object of clique activity within the ruling circles of the party. The object of these struggles is precisely public life . . . '27 And he went on to explain that in a society such as Poland, the fundamental arena in which political decisions are made is the party. If there had been the danger of small opposition groups becoming the playthings of party factions before August 1980, this was far less possible a fate for a huge social movement such as Solidarity.

But this orientation was rejected (including by Kuron himself) in favour of what was called, in Michnik's phrase, the 'New Evolutionism', dealing with the government rather than the PZPR, or in dealings with the latter, confining them to external relations between Solidarity and PZPR leading organs. Solidarity members in the PZPR were not discouraged from leaving the party. There were a number of distinct contributory arguments to this approach: the fear among workers of the PZPR apparatus returning to dominate them; the desire of the Church hierarchy to minimize the influence of party ideology within Solidarity; the belief that Solidarity was strong enough, and the governing authorities were reform-minded enough to gradually gain the necessary reforms from above; and a socio-economic reform programme shared by wide layers of

²⁷ See Kuron's "The Situation in the Country and the Programme of the Opposition', *Labour Focus*, III, 3 (July-August 1979). His argument brought a polemical response from Michnik and Lipski.

Solidarity intellectuals and advisers that involved marketization of the economy (along with plant self-management), taking it out of the control of the party apparatus in alliance with those sections of the state bureaucracy not institutionally tied to plant management. Finally, there was the argument that Czechoslovakia showed that structural change in the PZPR would lead to invasion.

Yet throughout its first nine months of existence, Solidarity and the PZPR rank and file could not be disentangled. The number of workers who actually resigned from the party between May 1980 and May 1981 was remarkably small: out of 1,400,000 workers in the PZPR only 180,000 resigned (resignations from other social groups in the same period were 126,000). The really mass exodus from the PZPR did not occur until after the June Party Congress (official figures give the losses from then up to December as being 500,000). After Bydgoszcz, these continuing links between the PZPR base and the Solidarity rank and file suddenly revealed themselves in a dramatic way, as the cc finally announced that the 9th Emergency Party Congress would take place in June. Writing in the party's theoretical organ in April, Rakowski explained, 'For the first time since September, a mass bloc has been created of the main party organizations together with Solidarity.' The Solidarity leadership itself was largely taken by surprise. At the beginning of May, Kuron stated 'This entire programme (of self-limitation) has fallen to pieces, because a revolution has started in the party. . . . This revolution has reached the party and now it is proceeding inside the party. And I don't know yet what should be done in this situation.'28

The reform movement within the PZPR should not, in fact be seen purely in horizontal terms, as a revolt of base against summit. There were individual leaders at all levels of the party interested in structural political reform and strategic cooperation with Solidarity, while there were substantial elements at the base, particularly in rural and small-town communities, and also in institutions such as the army and security police, not touched by reformism. But the main form of the reform movement was the so-called 'Horizontal Structures' movement, started in Torun in the Autumn of 1980. It involved party units breaking democratic centralism by establishing horizontal links with each other, outside the mediation of higher party bodies. The movement was not programmatically based: the sole criterion for a party unit joining was that it had elected its first secretary in a democratic secret ballot. (The idea was launched by the leader of the August strike in Torun, Zbigniew Iwanow, who drew it directly from the model of the MES and applied it to PZPR internal politics.)²⁹ The overwhelming thrust of the horizontal movement was towards internal democratization within the PZPR-11,000 proposals for changes in the statutes were sent in from the basel-plus cooperation with Solidarity. A second source of the movement for reform was the party intelligentsia and notably leading figures in the Higher Party College of Social Sciences, like Lamentowicz, who were seeking to establish new ideological principles for the PZPR, moving it from Stalinist conceptions towards new theoretical foundations

²⁸ Interview with Intercontinental Press, given on 2 May and published on 1 June 1981.

²⁹ On the origins of the movement see the interview with Iwanow in *Labour Focus*, IV, 4–6, p. 51.

presented as more in keeping with its name and formal origin: a Polish United Workers Party stemming from a fusion of the Polish Socialist and Communist parties in the late 1940s. Such ideas gained wide currency in some regional party organizations, notably Cracow. Yet a third trend was represented by Tadeusz Fiszbach and the Gdansk regional organization. This presented a new draft programmatic document whose central idea was the need for a democratized PZPR to establish a mechanism for gaining popular consent to its main policy proposals, suggesting for this purpose the use of referenda. Finally we should mention as a fourth current the more amorphous trend of 'party liberals' who sought to retain the formal accourrements of a Moscow-style 'Leninist vanguard party', while transforming its style of work. This, broadly speaking, was the stance of the Kania-Barcikowski grouping within the leadership.

In April delegates representing about half-a-million PZPA members held a national conference of the 'horizontal movement' in Torun and championed internal democratization and a call for the Congress to be held in two parts: the first should elect a new leadership and agree new statues; the second should agree a new party programme. The politburo majority sought to respond to this movement by seeking to incorporate it on the politburo's terms. These involved strictly defined democratic changes—above all the election of party executives by secret ballot—but a repudiation of new ideological principles or of new programmatic conceptions concerning the structural relations between the working class and the party—state authorities. At the same time the Kania group gave de facto recognition of the horizontal movement and sought to develop a centrist political course balancing between its activity and the thoroughgoing anti-reform elements within the bureaucracy.

The Moscow Letter

A week after Torun the first high level crsu delegation to visit Poland since August arrived in Warsaw led by Mikhail Suslov. Discussion focused on internal party affairs. On Suslov's return to Moscow, TASS reported a revisionist threat within the PZPR 'seeking to paralyse the Party of Polish Communists as the leading force in society'. During May factory and regional elections of party executives and Congress delegates returned strong reformist majorities. To counter this a serious attempt was prepared to topple Kania. On 26 May a so-called Katowice Forum published a document saying the politburo majority was under the influence of 'bourgeois liberalism'. This was denounced on all sides within the PZPR but was followed up by a political bombshell that transformed the mood inside the party. On ; June a letter to the party arrived from the Soviet Central Committee. It made a frontal attack on the party leadership saying, 'One position after another is being surrendered . . . ' to the counter-revolution, and 'so far no measures have been taken to counter it . . .'. It called the horizontal movement a 'tool for dismantling the party . . .'. It accused Kania and Jaruzelski of saying one thing and doing another and ended by saying that the situation 'demands first and foremost a revolutionary will from the Party, its members and its leadership—yes its leadership. The Party can and should find within itself the forces to reverse the course of events and restore them to the right path before the Congress.'

The effect of the letter was both to raise Kania's standing in the country and to drive the party's reform movement into wholesale retreat. A dividing line was drawn through it between those ready to dissolve into the Kania current and those not, and the latter were effectively marginalized at the Congress, Fiszbach, for example, was not even elected to the Central Committee at the Congress, while more radical reformers such as Stefan Bratkowski were not even elected as delegates (unless they had received their mandates before; June). Fiszbach told the Congress that the PZPR had achieved 'negligible results' since August and blamed this on the fact that 'we have wasted too much time defending positions we simply could not defend and did not need to'. He went on: I think the trade unions must be guaranteed the right to co-participation in taking strategic decisions.... Our Congress must map out a political programme for overcoming the crisis. . . . But it will not be possible to regain public trust by means of a programme. . . . The programme has to be implemented and proved right.'

But the Congress produced no such programme and was entirely devoted to the struggle over cc and politburo elections. The turnover of personnel was sweeping, but no new political course emerged and the crucial party secretariat was recomposed as even more anti-reformist than before. Bratkowski summed up the political colour of the delegates with the word 'magma'—vaguely reform-minded but ideologically and politically inchoate. As soon as the Congress was over, the state authorities unleashed an unparalleled offensive against Solidarity using the judicial apparatus, the central economic ministries and the newly remuzzled media. The military had strengthened their control over key posts, the party apparatus was increasingly by-passed and Kania himself reportedly became ill and torpid, sinking into depression.

As for Solidarity, it had stood aside from the dramatic battle in the party, throwing its enormous moral support behind none of the contending forces. It is impossible to say what would have happened if it had entered the fray. The obstacle to doing so was no longer the Solidarity leadership's rejection of an explicitly political involvement. But intervention would have involved giving at least implicit ideological support to forces within the orbit of Marxism.

Phase Five: Solidarity Seeks a Political Solution

By the summer of 1981, the Solidarity leadership had decided that a purely trade-unionist posture was no longer tenable for the movement. The general population ever more urgently needed positive solutions to the economic and social crisis, while the Solidarity activists were no longer prepared to wait for a government reform programme. They were moving from the politics of militant trade-union reformism towards what can best be described as an anarcho-syndicalist outlook, whereby Solidarity itself could directly establish a new political order without the need for the PZPR or parties of any kind.

The solution that emerged from the Solidarity leadership was the slogan of 'self-management' elaborated into the programme for a 'Self-Managed Republic' endorsed at Solidarity's Congress in September-October. The

programme was designed to fulfil a number of quite separate, and in certain respects profoundly conflicting requirements. In the first place it appealed to the ideological trend growing within the industrial working class towards an anarcho-syndicalist vision of a self-managed and at the same time self-governing republic (the words management and government being interchangeable in Polish in this context) without subordination to a monopolistic party. It also contained a strong theme of social egalitarianism. But at the same time the self-management idea incorporated a socio-economic programme which involved the more or less sweeping replacement of the planned economy by marketization in which completely autonomous, self-managed enterprises would struggle for their existence on a more or less free market, supervised by the banks. And the third component of the programme was that progress towards a self-managed republic would proceed gradually through the everwidening existence of self-management in the workplaces (along with marketization).

The critical elements in this programme were plant self-management and gradual evolutionism since they were the points of entry of the whole programme into the field of practical politics. Yet the social logic of plant self-management plus marketization ran directly counter to the social aspirations of the working class since August, especially in the context of a catastrophic economic crisis. Free-floating prices would have rocketed, large numbers of enterprises would have gone bankrupt, unemployment would have reached millions, rapid social differentiation would have divided the working class, and Solidarity itself would have almost certainly fragmented. It is one thing for the Western left to champion self-management at plant level in a capitalist context, on the road towards a planned economy and national self-management. It is quite another to champion self-management plus marketization in the context of a centrally planned economy which still protects the workers from unemployment and the effects of free-floating prices.

This indeed was the advantage of plant self-management from the standpoint of the Polish government itself (which even now has not dismantled all the self-management structures set up in 1981).³⁰ It saw this as a way of carrying through austerity and no doubt dividing the working class. What the authorities feared was that self-management would destroy the nomenklatura system and indeed the party apparatus itself at the local level. It therefore pushed, successfully, between the first and the second part of the Solidarity Congress for the Solidarity leadership to accept the nomenklatura within the government's new self-management law. (At the second part of the Congress, Walesa and Kuron were pilloried for accepting this point.)

³⁰ One of the earliest and most succinct proposals for self-management came from none other than Tadeusz Grabski. In January 1981 at a meeting of party leaders from the largest enterprises, he argued, 'Under the new economic system, the enterprise becomes the basic, independent economic unit. . . It must operate on the basis of cost accounting and face the consequences of its activities, while observing workers' self-management. It means the right of the workforce to decide independently on all essential matters as regards the functioning of the enterprise, starting with the organization of production and ending with staff policy, pay policy and the distribution of earnings' (Ruane p. 113.) Exactly the same formula could have been heard from some of Solidarity's economic advisers months later, although by no means all of them

The alternative thrust towards self-management in the economic field involved an attempt to bring the planned economy itself under effective national working-class control. This was argued theoretically only by a very few-inevitably Marxist-Solidarity advisers, such as Michal Kawecki in Szczecin, and was largely opposed by the professional economists amongst the Solidarity intellectuals. But in a practical way this thrust was strongly expressed at the Congress in the notion that Solidarity should take over control of food distribution, in the notion that a 'Social Council' should invigilate economic activity nationally. But the critical problem about such a practical course from the standpoint of the Solidarity leadership was that democratic working-class control over the plan, either in the form of a Social Council or through a second chamber being created in the Polish parliament with this task, was that it could involve a central political challenge to the country's political structure. And despite the very radical rhetoric at the Congress itself, the movement's national leadership around Lech Walesa were very far from believing they could or should mount such a challenge. Thus the slogan of self-management did not in fact resolve the contradictions within Solidarity, it simply obscured them linguistically. When the Congress ended, Solidarity had a formally more centralized structure and a presidium much more solidly under Walesa's control. But the movement's reality was very different. It lacked a clear practical perspective and was deeply and increasingly divided.

From October until 13 December, the working-class movement was entering a deep crisis. The strike wave from below that had begun in July and reached its peak in October declined rapidly thereafter. On 8 November an opinion poll reported that only 30% of people were prepared to contemplate a general strike for any purpose. Another poll in Warsaw at this time showed that 26% of the population supported abolishing the right to strike, according to Tygodnik Solidarnose. 31 A delegate at a national leadership meeting in early December reported that one third of the workers counted Solidarity as well as the government as being to blame for the crisis. Modzelewski added at the same meeting: 'The Union is not as strong as it was. It is weaker, and every activist knows it.' Ten days before the coup, Tygodnik Solidarnoss published a balance-sheet of the self-management movement. After many months of vigorous propaganda it affected only 15 to 20% of enterprises. In Lodz, an advanced region in this field, self-management committees existed in only 150 out of 1500 enterprises. Henryk Wujec reported from the Warsaw area, 'As long as it was a matter of drawing up our statutes, the movement was extremely active. But now that it has become a matter of putting them into practice, the movement has gone a bit slack.' In Bydgoszcz it was reported, We have observed among the workers a weakening of the self-management dynamic; hesitations are setting in. It 18 as if people had lost faith in continuing the movement.'32 Against this background, the state authorities were planning something very different from either self-management or anarcho-syndicalism.

^{31 13.11} B1

³² Typediath Sobiderman (4.12.81). Much of the material here is drawn from the afterword of Jean-Yves Potel's The Summer Before the Front See also Jadwiga Stanzkis, 'Poland on the Road to the Coup', Labour Focus, V, 1-2. For a contrary view of Solidarity's last weeks, see Zbigniew Kowalewski, 'Solidarnose on the Eve' in the same issue of Labour Focus.

Phase Six: Preparations for the State of War

The government offensive against Solidarity from August, consisting of hundreds of small challenges to its rights, opened up a growing gap between the increasingly radical and political rhetoric of Solidarity's activists and the mass of the population, increasingly weary of politics, pre-occupied with the daily struggle for existence, and looking for strong leadership to overcome the crisis. General Jaruzelski moved ever more prominently into the centre of the political stage to assume this role. While still proclaiming the need for reform, Jaruzelski brought increased vigour to the theme of order and iron—national unity to ensure Poland's independent salvation—and branded Solidarity as a force for chaos and national disintegration. The Solidarity Congress was characterized in this light.

Within the regime itself, the party apparatus was increasingly paralysed and by-passed, as the military and the security apparatuses assumed an ever greater role in policy-making. At the October plenum of the CC, Kania as the representative of the party apparatus made a last bid to re-assert his authority by demanding a vote of confidence. He was defeated by 104 votes to 79 in a secret ballot and Jaruzelski was appointed to replace him by 180 votes out of 184. This was a decisive turning point on the road to 13 December, greatly weakening those for whom it was a point of principle that the PZPR should manage the state as a mass political organization engaging in an interplay of political forces between itself and the population.

Yet the switch from Kania to Jaruzelski was welcomed by Walesa on behalf of Solidarity. Preparations for a possible military coup were known to the Solidarity leadership at least since July. On the other hand, Jaruzelski was genuinely in favour of economic decentralization and marketization. He was also ready to respect the power and the role of the Church and was little given to serving up large doses of Moscow-style Marxism-Leninism. Jaruzelski was himself fairly explicit about the alternative he was presenting. He offered the possibility of a national accord between himself, the Church and Solidarity, on his own terms, and he warned that the alternative would be martial law. Walesa entered discussions for such an accord but it was evident to Solidarity activists that this could only result in an authoritarian regime massively restricting Solidarity—the very opposite of a self-managed republic. Solidarity's main industrial regions strongly opposed Walesa's participation in such an accord and the stage was set for 13 December. In the last days, some of Solidarity's strongest regions, such as Szczecin, Wroclaw and Lodz, saw attempts by the movement's activists to prepare for pre-emptive local efforts to take power. On a national level, Solidarity made a last minute call for free elections to the Sejm, but such an appeal had a purely propagandistic significance.

When the blow fell on the night of 12-13 December, Poland's industrial workers found themselves alone. The Catholic hierarchy immediately issued a statement appealing to the population not to resist. In all the industrial bastions of Solidarity, the workers nevertheless threw themselves into occupation strikes. But their spirit was closer to that of a

willingness to sacrifice themselves than a will to win. The proof of this is that in no single case was the loyalty of the troops put to the test by active working-class resistance in December. The occupation strikes were broken through the action of zomo's 25,000 troops with the army playing only a back-up role. The explanation for this is not hard to find. The industrial workers saw the division in their own leadership, the way Solidarity had been weakened over many months, the lack of any clear vision of its practical way forward. They saw also the demobilization of the population around them and the regime's determination to crush them.

Jaruzelski's success on 13 December did not signify the Polish workers' abandonment of the traditions of Solidarity. They saw the movement as part of their own identity and no one with any experience of a working class's attachment to its own independent traditions can doubt that Solidarity has sunk deep roots in the historical experience of Polish workers. But 13 December has ensured that the course of Polish history has entered new, obscure and undoubtedly tortuous paths.

V. Conclusions

Any attempt to draw conclusions about the extraordinary and tragic Polish drama must await the passage of time and indeed the drama itself is still being played out. All we will attempt here are some points for further discussion, in the form of theses.

- (1) August 1980 and Solidarity represented, in social terms, a great constructive effort by Poland's industrial working class to overcome the crisis generated by the Gierek regime in a progressive and objectively socialist direction. The origins, self-definition, structure, composition and methods of struggle of Solidarity, as well as its internal democracy, all ensured that the movement could retain its integrity and cohesion only by respecting the interests of the industrial workers; and the social weight of the working class in Polish society ensured that Solidarity was the fundamental political factor in the popular upsurge. Throughout the crisis it was pitted objectively against the resistance of the state bureaucracy and the state leaderships of the surrounding countries. These were the two fundamental forces in the conflict, with all other socio-political groups occupying intermediate positions the mass membership of the PZPR, the Church, the reformist intelligentsia, the peasantry. This configuration of forces was starkly revealed in December 1981, as the state bureaucracy cast aside the PZPR and turned its repressive apparatus against a largely isolated industrial working class. The Church hierarchy far from being the driving force behind the working class in a putative holy war against Communism, was in many ways the main beneficiary of 13 December, gaining sweeping new financial privileges from the regime and the right to greatly extend its apparatus, while managing to preserve and, in the medium term even strengthen, its hold over the population as it looks in despair for solace.
- (2) But if the state bureaucracy and the Church hierarchy are the main beneficiaries of 13 December, and both Solidarity and the PZPR rank and file the main losers, this in turn highlights a serious ideological weakness

and political deficiency within the working-class movement. For by-and-large, the workers saw the episcopate as a close and powerful defender of its rights and they viewed the military leadership with far greater sympathy in the last months than they viewed the PZPR organizations. Our analysis of the events leading up to 13 December has shown that the driving of Solidarity underground at that time was simply the violent culmination of a political and social struggle in which Solidarity had already been thrown into retreat and some political disarray. Without this preparatory series of political defeats, General Jaruzelski's military triumph in December would have been inconceivable. Indeed, if it had not been for the very severe disintegration within the PZPR and the established political order, Solidarity might have been split and defeated without the necessity for the blitzkrieg. We must therefore look for the causes of Solidarity's earlier political defeats.

- (3) Our attempt to analyse the course of events during Solidarity's sixteen months of legal existence points inescapably to the conclusion that these defeats were not the result of the superior social weight of Solidarity's enemy within Polish society. On the contrary, the social balance of forces was overwhelmingly in Solidarity's favour. And in the global crisis, of if you like the revolutionary crisis, of any state, it is social forces, not technical apparatus whether of a military, administrative, financial or communications variety, that counts. The problem must therefore have been whether Solidarity had the political capacity to unite these social forces along a common path of action to surmount the crisis and overcome those seeking to destroy it.
- (4) The most pressing programmatic problem that Solidarity faced was how to maintain the social cohesion of the wage-earning population through the economic crisis and the inevitably severe and protracted period of austerity that would have to accompany any solution to the crisis. It is hard to escape the conclusion that a programme of marketization would have both destroyed the social cohesion of the working class and violated its strongly articulated egalitarian and socialist social values and interests. Ideas which meet the aspirations of active working-class movements catch on and spread with extraordinary rapidity, but plant self-management plus the market did not at all seize the imagination of Poland's manual workers. Indeed their preference for rationing rather than floating prices, full employment, and the equalization of rewards all pointed towards the preservation of the planned economy as well as its subordination to effective working-class political control. On such terms, the workers would in their majority have been prepared to make substantial quantitative sacrifices in income without losing their cohesion and active unity.
- (5) But if marketization and plant autonomy was not a viable socioeconomic programme for a movement dominated by the industrial workers, then the socio-political premisses of the entire strategy of 'New Evolutionism' were called in question. These premisses entailed the idea that the working class could disengage itself from the PZPR in the same way as the Church had and could then coexist with an evidently weakened but fundamentally unreformed and authoritarian bureaucratic state structure. Such an orientation assumed that the economy would be taken

out of the PZPR's control and also implied that those sections of the state bureaucracy not involved in operating the plan were in essence more progressive than those who were, despite the fact that they included precisely the most authoritarian and repressive sections of the state apparatus—the security forces. In this scheme of things a Jaruzelski appeared in some ways closer to Solidarity than a Fiszbach. There were impulses from within Solidarity counter-posing to this disengagement of the 'New Evolutionists' a drive towards a democratic central mechanism of economic management—a vision of this sort could be perceived within such ideas as national working-class control over the distribution system and in the idea of a workers' chamber of the Sejm. The conception had been raised, somewhat half-heartedly, before in Yugoslavia, and in its abstract form it could be presented as a national council made up of democratically elected delegates from workplaces. But whatever its form it would have involved a political thrust in the opposite direction from disengagement.

- (6) This in turn raises the question whether Solidarity's leaders and advisers were right to largely ignore, or even turn their back on, the forces struggling for ideological, political and organizational change within the PZPR. In the context of any strategy for democratizing the central mechanisms of economic management, such an orientation would have been indispensable. But more generally, Kuron's arguments of 1979 in favour of such an orientation then contained even greater force in 1980-81. The social premiss for such an orientation was present from the start in the huge numbers of PZPR members within Solidarity, while within the party reform movement there were large forces ready to respond to pressure and support from Solidarity. But the inescapable consequences of such an orientation should also be registered. These were not so much that Solidarity, or a section of it, might have become the plaything of this or that faction of the PZPR leadership, however understandable such fears were amongst workers who had lived through 1956 and the early 1970s. Such problems could have been handled tactically. The real consequence was rather an ideological one: insofar as Solidarity, or a wing of it, linked up and tried to publicly encourage any tendency within the PZPR, it would have had to explicitly embrace and indeed champion, socialist ideological principles, and identify with global socialist programmatic conceptions. This did not mean it would have had to adopt Stalinist views of any variety, but it would have had to champion the cause of the anti-Stalinist socialist and Marxist currents growing at the base of the PZPR. This would in turn have brought about an open, ideological and political pluralism within Solidarity, as those forces most closely linked to the Catholic hierarchy's project would have resisted such socialist democratic trends.
- (7) This raises, of course, the question of the nature of the relationship between Solidarity and the Church hierarchy. In the 1960s and 1970s, the independent existence of the Church unquestionably opened up space for debate and the circulation of information in Polish society not available in other East European states. And the episcopate's readiness, for its own reasons, to oppose the suppression of intellectual opposition groups in the late 1970s played an objectively progressive role. At the same time, it would be a crime for socialists to fail to respect the religious rights of

believers or to treat Christians as in any sense ipso facto opponents of socialism and democratic rights. But this does not at all exhaust the subject of Solidarity's relationship with the episcopate. If the latter played a partially progressive role in defending civil liberties before August, it was dwarfed by Solidarity's own role in this field after it emerged. Throughout the crisis the hierarchy repeatedly intervened to weaken working-class resolve—in August, in the Bydgoszcz crisis and again in December 1981. It was ready to attack non-Catholic political currents within the movement—as with the KOR in December 1980—and was resolute in its refusal to subordinate its own parrow institutional interests. to those of the popular social movement, avoiding doing so by equating the interests of its own authoritarian bureaucracy with the interests of the Church as a Christian community and even with the interests of 'the nation'. The workers gained great confidence from the hierarchy's verbal gestures of support early in the crisis but the episcopate had little choice in the matter if it wished to maintain its popular, and indeed financial, base. It is, in truth, impossible for an institution which crushes dissent within its own ranks and seeks to impose monolithic unity on its followers in their beliefs as well as their actions to be a trustworthy ally of any democratic popular movement for social progress.

- (8) Solidarity did not at any time become a passive tool of the Church hierarchy, however much the latter's real social role may have remained a powerful impediment to the movement. Instead the industrial workers at the movement's core generated an independent ideological conception of their historical trajectory that we have called anarcho-syndicalism, linked to a strain of revolutionary, romantic nationalism in which the workers conceived of themselves as the leading force in Polish society. But however mistaken it would be to equate such ideological conceptions with reactionary anti-socialist ideas, this vision contained within it contradictions which played a part in weakening the movement's unity. In the first place, though generated by Solidarity's own structure, anarcho-syndicalism simply obliterated the real tensions over whether Solidarity was to play the role of a trade union, of a political party or of a quasi-state institution—it did not resolve these tensions. Large sections of the working class were not prepared to abandon a purely tradeunionist conception of Solidarity and were not politically won over to a perspective of anarcho-syndicalist revolution. Secondly, the nationalist vision of the workers tended to presuppose a unity of social interests and of programmatic objectives which had not been present in the crisis, and whose absence was brutally revealed on 13 December.
- (9) Finally, we must consider the basic issue of reform and revolution in the states of Eastern Europe. The capacity of the domestic Polish state bureaucracy to challenge the working-class movement militarily might suggest that this bureaucracy possesses the independence and homogeneity of a ruling class akin to the Western bourgeoisie and that the working class must enter the road of social revolution and insurrection in order to achieve socialist democracy. Yet in our view, the superficial similarities between 13 December and military coups in the Third World obscure more than they reveal. In the first place, the crackdown bears no comparison with the scale of carnage in Chile or Argentina or Turkey. This is not to suggest that there are not elements within the Polish regime

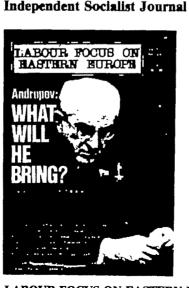
capable, subjectively, of killing large numbers of workers. It is simply that experience teaches these bureaucratic regimes that even a few hundred deaths—as opposed to tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands in individual bourgeois states since the war-can spell catastrophe for their perpetrators within a few short years, because of the socio-economic structure of these states and the place of the working class within them. The Polish regime has thus had to put up with continuing political resistance on a wide scale. The extraordinarily rapid growth and consolidation of the working-class movement in 1980 and its capacity to pull all other sections of the masses behind it, while thoroughly disorganizing the internal mechanisms of the political system, is a further testimony to this social balance of forces in Eastern Europe. And while the state bureaucracy is a real social antagonist of the workers that will not reform itself, its subordination to popular sovereignty involves essentially a political revolution drawing strength from the socio-economic foundations of the state. If such a political revolution need not necessarily entail insurrection, what it does require, however, is a break with the ideological, political and organizational principles of Stalinism and of the Stalinized party. This cannot be achieved by the manoeuvres of factions at the top. But the Polish events do not exclude the possibility of such a transformation being carried out through the combination of a mass movement outside and an allied mass current inside the CP. It leaves the question open. Open too is the most fundamental issue of all: whether under some circumstances the hostility of the CPSU leadership to movements towards socialist democracy could still remain below the threshold of military invasion.

These attempts to explore some of the factors involved in Solidarity's defeat should not be taken to imply any attempt to distance ourselves from the Polish working class, blame it for its own defeat and wag a disapproving finger at its leaders. Socialists in the West must draw exactly the opposite conclusion, by recognizing that the really fundamental problem faced by Poland's workers lies outside Poland, in the absence of any post-Stalinist, socialist and democratic workers' state which could point the way for their own struggle. Every voice they could hear for decades, from Radio Moscow to Voice of America, told them the same story: that they must choose between two alternatives only—a Soviet-type of state and a capitalist one. For sixteeen months they sought to move Poland towards a new and progressive solution to the impasse of Stalinism. But as they did so they were told incessantly, by 'friends' and enemies that proletarian action and solutions could as likely lead to chaos as to a new and viable political order.

When in August 1980, Poland's workers rose in a genuinely heroic collective effort to create an alternative to the authoritarian-bureaucratic political order that Stalinism had bequeathed, they had available to them precious little coherent programmatic conceptions from Western left to help them in this task. What had the Socialist or Communist Parties of Western Europe to say about how to install democratic management of a planned economy; about how to bring state bureaucracies under authentic popular control; about how to combine economic austerity with a genuinely egalitarian social programme; about socialist alternatives to the Stalinist model of monopolistic party rule and internal

political monolithism? The truth is that the Western socialist left is not only almost totally unprepared to provide coherent answers to such questions that go beyond general doctrinal truths; it has also, for various reasons, tended to ignore developments and problems in Eastern Europe, leaving the field clear for the Kolakowskis and Brzezinskis, the institutes and ideologues of NATO, who devote massive efforts towards working out the intellectual and practical problems of the transition from Stalinism to something more amenable to bourgeois requirements. And their schemes are always directed above all at destroying the planned economies and the concommitant social gains and rights of working people in these states.

The outstanding feature of the Polish crisis from 1980 to 1982 was the extraordinary resourcefulness of the Polish working class, its astounding organizational capacities, discipline and inventiveness. Solidarity's system months of open existence, its triumphs, difficulties, quest for solutions and defeats, will be the indispensible starting point for future Marxist discussion of the transition from Stalinism to socialist democracy. But the Polish crisis also demonstrates more starkly than ever before how central to any strategy for socialism in Europe is the necessity for links between the labour and socialist movements in Western Europe and the workers and intelligentsia in Eastern Europe. The crisis revealed the fundamental identity of social and political interests of these forces: their common struggles for economic and social security, for an egalitarian society, for a political system anchored in authentic popular sovereignty and radical democratic control. But it also revealed the huge gulf in experience, in perception and in forms of thought; a gulf all too easily exploited by the enemies of socialist advance on both sides of divided Europe. The Polish workers are still struggling for control over their own density, and the need for socialists in the West to support their rights and to engage them in a dialogue is as pressing as ever.



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Trotsky's Interpretation of Stalinism

Trotsky's interpretation of the historical meaning of Stalinism, to this day the most coherent and developed theorization of the phenomenon within the Marxist tradition, was constructed in the course of twenty years of practical political struggle against it. His thought thus evolved in tension with the major conflicts and events of these years, and can be conveniently periodized into three essential phases.*

Trotsky's early writings on the subject date from the inner-party struggle that broke out in the CPSU after the Civil War. They do not name Stalinism as such. Their focus is what party tradition called 'bureaucratism'. The New Course (1923) is the key text of this period. In it, Trotsky took over the two major terms of what had been Lenin's explanations of this before his death. Bureaucratism, Lenin had argued, was rooted in the lack of culture of the Russian masses, rural or urban, that deprived them of the necessary aptitudes for competent postwar administration, and in the petty-commodity and

subsistence character of the agrarian economy, whose immense dispersal of the primary producers rendered inevitable an over-centralization of the state apparatus in Russia. Trotsky subjoined a third cause—the inevitable contradiction between the immediate and long-term interests of the working class, amidst the great shortages and dire exigencies of postwar construction. More significantly, however, he insisted that bureaucratism was not 'only the aggregate of the bad habits of office-holders', but represented 'a social phenomenon—2 definite system of administration of men and things'. The main locus of this phenomenon was the state apparatus, but the latter-by absorbing 'an enormous quantity of the most active party elements'2—was infecting the Bolshevik Party itself. The expression of this contamination was the increasing dominance of the central apparatus within the party, operating through an appointments system, repressing democratic debate, and dividing the Old Guard from the rank-and-file and younger generation. This development posed the danger of a 'bureaucratic degeneration' of the Old Guard itself. Bureaucratism was thus here Trotsky broke clearly beyond Lenin's analysis—'not a survival of some preceding regime, a survival in the process of disappearing; on the contrary, it is an essentially new phenomenon, flowing from the new tasks, the new functions, the new difficulties and the new mistakes of the party'.4

Defeat of the Left Opposition

The New Course warned of the dangers of bureaucratism prior to the victory of Stalin's grouping within the CPSU. After the consummation of that victory, Trotsky's oppositional writings in the later 1920s attempt to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon. The Third International after Lenin (1928) is probably the most important text for his views in this intermediary phase of his thought. There, he attributes the defeat of the Left Opposition within Russia, which sealed the triumph of a bureaucratic internal regime, to the downswing of the international class strangle: above all, the disasters that had overtaken the German Revolution in 1923 and the Chinese Revolution in 1927. respectively on the Western and Bastern flanks of the USSR. The shift in the world balance of class forces to the advantage of capital was inevitably translated into an increase in alien social pressures on the Bolshevik Party itself, within Russia. These were in turn compounded by the failure of Stalin's faction to pursue rapid industrialization in the ussR to date, which would have strengthened the countervailing weight of the Soviet proletariat. After the effects of the First Five-Year Plan became visible, Trotsky modified this claim to argue that the new 'labour aristocracy' created by Stakhanovism, above the mass of the working-class, objectively functioned as a support of the bureaucratic regime within the party. Stalin's own faction, which had won its victory on the social-patriotic slogan of Socialism in One Country, Trotsky still characterized as a Centre, poised between the party Right (Bukharin-Rykov-Tomsky) and the Left, the creature of the permanent apparatus of the CPSU.

^{*} Text of a talk given in Paris in 1982.

¹ The New Course, Ann Arbour 1965, p. 45.

² Thul, p. 45

³ Ibid, p. 22.

⁴ Ibd, p. 24

In his autobiography My Life (1929), he sketched what he saw as the social-psychological mechanisms that had converted so many revolutionaries of 1917 into functionaries of this regime—'the liberation of the philistine in the Bolshevik'—as the elan of the insurgent masses declined in the aftermath of the Civil War, and fatigue and apathy set in, creating a period of generalized 'social reaction' in the ussa. In subsequent essays on Stalin's industrialization drive, Trotsky extended the notion of a factional 'Centre' into the more far-ranging category of Stalinist centrism—arguing that while centrism was an inherently unstable phenomenon in capitalist countries, a posture mid-way between reform and revolution in the labour movement, reflecting shifts from left to right or vice-versa in mass pressures, in the USSR it could acquire a durable material basis in the bureaucracy of the new workers' state. The abrupt zig-zags of Stalin's policies at home and abroad, from appeasement to all-out war on the kulaks, from class conciliationism to ultra-leftism in the Third International, were the logical expression of this centrist character of his regime, subject to complex and contradictory class pressures on it. The decisive court of these pressures, however, was international, not national.

The Four Fundamental Theses

Trotsky's interpretation of Stalinism, hitherto still fragmentary and tentative in many respects, became systematic and conclusive from 1933 onwards. The reason, of course, was the triumph of Nazism in Germany, which convinced Trotsky that the Comintern—for whose rectification of line he had fought down to the last moment—was now unrecuperable, and with it the Stalinized cresu itself. The decision to found a new International was thus the immediate impulse for his frontal engagement with the problem of the nature of Stalinism, which for the first time now became the direct object of extended theoretical interpretation in itself, rather than an issue treated in the course of texts discussing many other questions, as previously.

The crucial essay that provides nearly all the main themes of Trotsky's mature thought on Stalinism was written within a few months of Hitler's seizure of power: The Class Nature of the Soviet State (1933). In it, he set out the four fundamental theses that were to be the basis of his position down to his death. Firstly, the role of Stalinism at home and abroad had to be distinguished. Within the USSR, the Stalinist bureaucracy played a contradictory role—defending itself simultaneously against the Soviet working-class, from which it had usurped power, and against the world bourgeoisie, which sought to wipe out all the gains of the October Revolution and restore capitalism in Russia. In this sense, it continued to act as a 'centrist' force. Outside the USSR, by contrast, the Stalinized Comintern had ceased to play any anti-capitalist role, as its debacle in Germany had now irrevocably proved. Hence 'the Stalinist apparatus could completely squander its meaning as an international revolutionary force, and yet preserve part of its progressive meaning as the gate-keeper of the social conquests of the proletarian revolution". 5 Soon afterwards, Trotsky would argue that the Comintern performed an actively

⁵ The Class Nature of the Sevent State, London 1968, p. 4.

counter-revolutionary role in world politics, colluding with capital and shackling labour in the interests of protecting the Stalinist monopoly of power in Russia itself, which would be threatened by the example of any victory of a socialist revolution, creating a proletarian democracy, elsewhere.

Secondly, within the USSR Stalinism represented the rule of a bureaucratic stratum, emergent from and parasitic upon the working class, not a new class. This stratum occupied no independent structural role in the process of production proper, but derived its economic privileges from its confiscation of political power from the direct producers, within the framework of nationalized property relations. Thirdly, the administration over which it presided remained typologically a workers' state, precisely because these property relations—embodying the expropriation of the expropriators achieved in 1917—persisted. The identity and legitimacy of the bureaucracy as a political 'caste' depended on its defense of them. Therewith, Trotsky dismissed the two alternative accounts of Stalinism most widespread in the labour movement in the 1930s (which had emerged within the Second International during the Civil War itself)—that it represented a form of 'state capitalism' or of 'bureaucratic collectivism'. The iron dictatorship exercised by the Stalinist police and administrative apparatus over the Soviet proletariat was not incompatible with the preservation of the proletarian nature of the state itself—any more than the Absolutist dictatorships over the nobility had been incompatible with the preservation of the nature of the feudal state, or the fascist dictatorships exercised over the bourgeois class were with the preservation of the nature of the capitalist state. The ussa was indeed a dependented workers' state, but a 'pure' dictatorship of the proletariatconformable to an ideal definition of it—had never existed in the Soviet Union in the first instance.

Fourthly and finally, Marxists should adopt a two-fold stance towards the Soviet state. On the one hand, there was now no chance of the Stalinist regime either reforming itself or being reformed peacefully within the USSR. Its rule could only be ended by a revolutionary overthrow from below, destroying its whole machinery of privilege and repression, while leaving intact the social property relations over which it presided—if now within the context of a proletarian democracy. On the other hand, the Soviet state had to be defended externally against the constant menace of aggression or attack by the world bourgeoisie. Against this enemy, the USSR—incarnating as it did the anti-capitalist gains of October—needed the resolute and unconditional solidarity of revolutionary socialists everywhere. 'Every political tendency that waves its hand hopelessly at the Soviet Union, under the pretext of its "non-proletarian" character, runs the risk of becoming the passive instrument of imperialism.' 6

'The Revolution Betrayed'

These four corner-stones of Trotsky's account of Stalinism remained stable down to his assassination. It was on them that he erected the major edifice of this study of Soviet society under Stalin: the book entitled Where

⁶ III, p 32.

is Russia Going? (1936: misleadingly translated as The Revolution Betrayed). In this work, Trotsky presented a panoramic survey of the economic, political, social and cultural structures of the USSR in the mid thirties, combining a wide range of empirical materials with a deeper theoretical foundation for his analysis of Stalinism. The whole phenomenon of a repressive workers' bureaucracy he now anchored in the category of scarcity (nexbda), basic to historical materialism since Marx's formulation of it in The German Ideology. 'The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there are enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to. When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting-point of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy. It "knows" who is to get something and who has to wait.' So long as scarcity prevailed, a contradiction was inevitable between socialized relations of production and bourgeois norms of distribution: it was this contradiction that fatally produced and reproduced the constraining power of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Trotsky then went on to explore each side of the contradiction, assessing and emphasizing the grandeur of Soviet industrial development, however barbaric the methods the bureaucracy employed to drive it forward, while at the same time meticulously exposing the vast gamut of economic, cultural and social inequalities generated by Stalinism, and providing statistical estimates of the size and distribution of the bureaucratic stratum in the USSR itself (some 12-15% of the population). This bureaucracy has betrayed world revolution, even if it still felt subjectively loyal to it; yet it remained an irreconcilable enemy in the eyes of the world bourgeoisie, so long as capitalism was not restored in Russia. The dynamic of its regime was equally contradictory; on the one hand, the very development it had promoted at breakneck pace within the USSR was rapidly increasing the economic and cultural potential of the Soviet working class, its capacity to rise up against it; while on the other hand its own parasitism was increasingly an impediment to further industrial progress. However spectacular the accomplishments of the Five-Year Plans, Trotsky warned, they still left social productivity of labour far behind that of Western capitalism, in a gap that would never be closed until a shift to qualitative growth was achieved, which bureaucratic misrule precisely blocked.

'The progressive role of the Soviet bureaucracy coincides with the period devoted to introducing into the Soviet Union the most important elements of capitalist technique. The rough work of borrowing, imitating, transplanting and grafting, was accomplished on bases laid down by the revolution. There was, thus far, no question of any new word in the sphere of technique, science or art. It is possible to build gigantic factories according to a ready-made pattern by bureaucratic command—although, to be sure, at triple the normal cost. But the farther you go, the more economy runs into problems of quality, which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow. The Soviet products are as though branded with the gray label of indifference. Under a nationalized

⁷ The Revolution Betrayed, New York 1945, p. 112.

economy, quality demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative. ¹⁸ Technological superiority would rest with imperialism so long as Stalinism persisted, and assure it victory in any war with the ussr—unless a revolution in the West broke out. The task of Soviet socialists was to accomplish a political revolution against the entrenched bureucracy beforehand, whose relation to the socioeconomic revolution of 1917 would be as the change of power in 1830 or 1848 was to the upheaval of 1789 in France in the cycle of bourgeois revolutions.

In the final two years of his life, as the Second World War started, Trotsky resterated his basic perspectives in a series of concluding polemics with Rizzi, Burnham, Schachtman and other proponents of the notion of 'bureaucratic collectivism'. The working class was in no way congenitally incapable of establishing its own sovereign rule over society. The USSR—'the most transitional country in a transitional epoch'—lay between capitalism and socialism, gripped by a ferocious police regime that yet still defended in its own fashion the dictatorship of the proletariat. But Soviet experience was an 'exceptional refraction' of the general laws of transition from capitalism to socialism, in a backward country surrounded by imperialism—not a modal type. The contradictory role of Stalinism at home and abroad had been confirmed by the most recent episodes of international politics—its counter-revolutionary sabotage of the Spanish Revolution (beyond its control) contrasted with its revolutionary abolition of private property in the border regions of Poland and Finland incorporated by it into the USSR. The duty of Marxists to defend the Soviet Union against capitalist attack remained undiminished. Disillusionment and fatigue were no excuses for renouncing the classical perspectives of historical materialism. 'Twenty-five years in the scales of history, when it is a question of profoundest changes in economic and cultural systems, weigh less than an hour in the life of man. What good is the individual who, because of empirical failures in the course of an hour or a day, renounces a goal that he set for himself on the basis of the experience and analysis of his entire previous life-time?'9

A Reassessment: Forty Years Later

Another forty years on, we are still only a few hours into that life-time. Do these hours—which subjectively seem so long—give us reasons to question Trotsky's basic judgements? How should we assess the legacy of his overall perspective on Stalinism?

The merits of Trotsky's interpretation, it might be said, are three-fold. Firstly, it provides a theory of the phenomenon of Stalinism in a long historical temporality, congruent with the fundamental categories of classical Marxism. At every point in his account of the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy, Trotsky sought to situate it in the logic of successive modes of production and transitions between them, with corresponding class powers and political regimes, that he inherited from Marx, Engels or

⁸ Ibd, p. 176.

⁹ In Defeate of Marxiese, New York 1965, p 15

Lenin. Hence his insistence that the proper optic for defining the relation of the bureaucracy to the working class was the antecedent and analogous relationships between absolutism and aristocracy, fascism and bourgeoisie; just as the relevant precedents for its future overthrow would be political risings such as those of 1830 or 1848 rather than a new 1789. Because he could think the emergence and consolidation of Stalinism in a historical time-span of this epochal character, he avoided the explanations of hasty journalism and improvised confections of new classes or modes of production, unanchored in historical materialism, which marked the reaction of many of his contemporaries.

Secondly, the sociological richness and penetration of his survey of the USSA under Stalin had no equal in the literature of the Left on the subject. Where is Russia Going? remains a topical masterpiece to this day, by the side of which the collected articles of Schachtman or Kautsky, the books by Burnham or Rizzi or Cliff, appear strikingly thin and dated. The major advances in detailed empirical analysis of the USSA since Trotsky's time have largely come from professional scholars working in Sovietological institutions after the Second World War: Nove, Rigby, Carr, Davies, Hough, Lane and others. Their findings have essentially developed rather than contradicated Trotsky's account, providing us with far greater knowledge of the inner structures of the Soviet economy and the Soviet bureaucracy, but without an integrated theory of it such as that bequeathed by Trotsky. The greatest historical work on the fate of the Revolution, the writings of Isaac Deutscher, was composed in profound continuity with this legacy.

Thirdly, Trotsky's interpretation of Stalinism was remarkable for its tolitical balance—its refusal of either adulation or commination, for a sober estimate of the contradictory nature and dynamic of the bureaucratic regime in the ussa. In Trotsky's life-time, it was the former attitude that was unusual on the Left, amidst the intoxicated enthusiasm not only of Communist parties but of so many other observers for the Stalinist order in Russia. Today, it is the latter attitude that is the more unusual, amidst the apoplectic denunciation not only by so many observers on the Left but even within certain Communist parties of the Soviet experience as such. There is little doubt that it was Trotsky's firm insistence—so unfashionable in later years, even among many of his own followers that the USSR was in the final resort a workers' state that was the key to this equilibrium. Those who rejected this classification for the notions of 'state capitalism' or 'bureaucratic collectivism' were invariably left with the difficulty of defining a political attitude towards the entity they had so categorized. For if one thing was evident about 'state capitalism' or 'bureaucratic collectivism' in Russia, it was that it lacked any vestige of the democratic liberties to be found in 'private capitalism' in the West. Should not, therefore, socialists support the latter in a conflict between the two, as far the lesser—because 'non-totalitarian'—evil? The logic of these interpretations, in other words, always ultimately tended (though with individual, less consistent exceptions) to shift their adherents to the Right. Kautsky-father of 'state capitalism' and 'bureaucratic collectivism' alike in the early 1920s—is emblematic of this trajectory; Schachtman ended his career applauding the us war in Vietnam in the 1960s. The contrasting solidity and discipline of Trotsky's interpretation

of Stalinism has only acquired retrospective relief from the attempts to rethink Stalinism that followed it.

The Limitations of Trotsky's Analysis

At the same time, like all historical judgements, Trotsky's theorization of Stalinism was to reveal certain limits after his death. What were these? Paradoxically, they concern less the 'internal' balance-sheet of Stalinism, than its 'external' record. Domestically, Trotsky's diagnosis of the motor and the brake on Russian economic development, so long as bureaucratic rule persisted, proved extraordinarily accurate. Enormous material progress was to be registered in the Soviet Union in the four decades after he died; but labour productivity has revealed itself more and more as the Achilles heel of the economy, as he predicted. As the epoch of extensive growth has come to an end, over-centralized authoritarian planning has proved increasingly unable to effect a transition to qualitative, intensive growth: a slow-down threatening an entropic crisis for the regime, if unresolved. The durability of the bureaucracy itself, surviving well past Stalin, has been greater, of course, than Trotsky imagined in some of his conjunctural writings; although not a real 'longevity' in terms of the historical time of which he spoke at the end of his life.

Part of the reason for this persistence has probably been the very social promotion of sectors of the Soviet working class through the channels of the bureaucratic regime itself—the proletarian recruitment of so many of whose cadres has often been emphasized by subsequent scholars (Nove, Rigby, etc.). Another part, of course, has lain in the political atomization and cultural stunning of the greatly enlarged working class that emerged during the 1930s—its lack of any pre-Stalinist memory, which Trotsky underestimated. But by and large, the portrait of Russian society he drew nearly half a century ago remains arrestingly accurate and contemporary in its vision today.

Abroad, however, Trotsky's diagnosis of Stalinism proved more fallible. There were two reasons for this discrepancy in his prognostications. Firstly, he erred in qualifying the external role of the Soviet bureaucracy as simply and unilaterally 'counter-revolutionary'—whereas in fact it was to prove profoundly contradictory in its actions and effects abroad, just as much as it was at home. Secondly, he was mistaken in thinking that Stalinism represented merely an 'exceptional' or 'aberrant' refraction of the general laws of transition from capitalism to socialism, that would be confined to Russia itself. The structures of bureaucratic power and mobilization pioneered under Stalin proved to be both more dynamic and more general a phenomenon on the international plane than Trotsky ever imagined. He ended his life predicting that the USSR would be defeated in a war with imperialism, unless revolution broke out in the West. In fact, for all Stalin's own criminal blunders, the Red Army threw back the Wehrmacht and marched victoriously to Berlin, with no aid from a Western Revolution. European fascism was essentially destroyed by the Soviet Union (242 German divisions deployed on the Eastern Front to a mere 22 on the first Western Front in Italy). Capitalism was abolished over one half of the Continent, by bureaucratic fiat from above—the Polish and Finnish operations extended to the Elbe. Thereafter, the

commanded the masses in their assault on power. The states they created were to be manifestly cognate (not identical: affinal) with the USSR, in their basic political system. Stalinism, in other words, proved to be not just an apparatus, but a movement—one capable not only of keeping power in a backward environment dominated by scarcity (USSR); but of actually winning power in environments that were yet more backward and destitute (China, Vietnam)—of expropriating the bourgeoisie and starting the slow work of socialist construction, even against the will of Stalin himself. Therewith, one of the equations in Trotsky's interpretation undoubtedly fell. Stalinism as a broad phenomenon—that is, a workers' state ruled by an authoritarian bureaucratic stratum—did not merely represent a degeneration from a prior state of (relative) class gracerit could also be a spontaneous generation produced by revolutionary class forces in very backward societies, without any tradition of either bourgeois or proletarian democracy. This possibility—whose realization was to transform the map of the world after 1945—was never envisaged by Trotsky.

Stalinism Today

In these two critical respects, then, Trotsky's interpretation of Stalinism encountered its limits. But they remain consonant with his central thematic emphasis—the contradictory nature of Stalinism, hostile at once to capitalist property and to proletarian liberty. His error was, ironically, only to have thought that this contradiction could be confined to the USSR itself: whereas Stalinism in One Country was to prove a contradiction in terms. In pointing out the ways in which Stalinism continued to act as an 'international revolutionary factor' here, it should not be necessary to recall at the same time the ways in which it also continued to act as an international reactionary factor. Every unpredictable gain had an incalculable price. The multiplication of bureaucratized workers' states, each with its own sacred national egoism, has inexorably led to economic, political and now even armed conflicts between them. The military shield the USSR can extend to socialist revolutions or national liberation forces in the Third World also objectively increases the dangers of global nuclear war. The abolition of capitalism in Eastern Europe has unleashed the furies of nationalism against Russia, which has in turn responded to popular aspirations in the region with the most purely reactionary series of external interventions, repressive and regressive, of the Soviet bureaucracy anywhere in the world. Czechoslovakia and Poland are only the latest examples.

Above all, however, while the basic Stalinist model of a transition beyond capitalism may have propagated itself successfully across the backward zones of Eurasia, its very geographical extension and temporal prolongation—complete with the repetition of dementia like the Yezhovschina in the 'Cultural Revolution', and 'Democratic Kampuchea'—have deeply tarnished the very idea of socialism in the advanced West, its absolute negation of proletarian democracy inhibiting the working class from an assault on capitalism within the structures of bourgeois democracy, and thereby decisively strangthening the bastions of imperialism in the late twentieth century. Risn me is perd, alas. We have still to settle accounts with

permanent threat of the 'socialist camp' acted as the decisive accelerator of bourgeois decolonization in Africa and Asia in the postwar epoch. Without the Second World of the 1940s and 1950s, there would have been no Third World in the 1960s. The two major forms of historical progress registered within world capitalism in the past fifty years—the defeat of fascism, the end of colonialism—have thus been directly dependent on the presence and performance of the ussa in international politics. In this sense, it could be argued that, paradoxically, the exploited classes outside the Soviet Union may have benefited more directly from its existence than the working class inside the Soviet Union: that on a world-historical scale the decisive costs of Stalinism have been internal, the gains external.

Yet these effects have, of course, been largely objective and involuntary processes, rather than the products of conscious intentions of the Soviet bureaucracy (even the destruction of fascism, which certainly formed no part of Stalin's plans in 1940). They testify, nonetheless, to the contradictory logic of a 'degenerated workers' state'-colossally distorted, yet still persistently anti-capitalist—which Trotsky wrongly suspended at the Soviet frontier-posts. By the late 60's, the ussn had even achieved something like that strategic parity with imperialism which he had thought impossible under bureaucratic rule, and therewith proved capable of extending vital economic and military aid to socialist revolutions and national liberation movements abroad—assuring the survival of the Cuban Revolution, permitting the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution, securing the existence of the Angolan Revolution. Such entirely conscious and deliberate actions—in diametric contrast to Stalin's options in Spain, Yugoslavia or Greece-were precisely those Trotsky had ruled out for the Soviet Union, when he pronounced it an unequivocally and ubiquitously counter-revolutionary force beyond its own borders.

The second disconfirmation of Trotsky's interpretation was more radical. For him, Stalinism was essentially a bureaucratic apparatus, erected above a broken working class, in the name of the 'national-reformist' myth of Socialism in One Country. The foreign parties of the Comintern, after 1933, he judged to be simply subordinate instruments of the CPSU, incapable of making a socialist revolution in their own countries because to do so would be to act against Stalin's directives. The most he would concede was that—in absolutely exceptional cases—insurgent masses might compel such parties to take power, against their own will. At the same time, he looked forward above all to the industrialized West as the theatre of successful socialist advance, inspired by anti-Stalinist parties, in the wake of the Second World War. In fact, as we know, history took another turn. Revolution did spread, but to the backward regions of Asia and the Balkans. Moreover, these revolutions were uniformly organized and led by local Communist parties professing loyalty to Stalin—Chinese, Vietnamese, Yugoslavs, Albanian—and modelled in their internal structures on the CPSU. Far from being passively propelled by the masses in their countries, these parties actively mobilized and vertically the immense skein of international consequences and connections, progressive and regressive, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary, that followed from the fate that befell the October Revolution, that give rise to the phenomenon we still call Stalinism today.

Len Doyal Roger Harris

The Practical Foundations of Human Understanding

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This essay concerns the significance of 'human sensuous activity'—what has become known variously as 'praxis' to many Marxists and 'action' to analytic and phenomenological philosophers.* Put grandly, our thesis is that it is from labour, and not from language or thought, that the category of meaning arises. That is to say that a logically necessary foundation for agreement in what people say and mean is to be found in what they do—interpreted in a broad and not specifically economic sense which we shall clarify. Most of this essay will not be concerned with the more common problematics of Marxism, but we would argue that the topic we are addressing is crucial to the philosophical coherence of Marxist theory. Our subject matter can be described from a Marxist perspective as the division of manual from mental labour. However, we shall be discussing this division in ontological rather than historical terms. We will argue that labour possesses the property of being intelligible, prior to the intelligibility of language and thought, and that this must be so in order that the structures of meaning contained in the latter can arise. The view that such

structures of meaning are created on the foundation of human labour is not one that most Marxists would dispute. What is dubious, however, is the significance and coherence of this historical thesis if labour is construed, ontologically, as a secondary construct: an amalgam of the logically and ontologically prior categories of physical activity and mental or linguistic meaning, respectively. While some Marxists might also reject the construal of labour as a secondary construct, it is noteworthy that others would not, quoting in support of their view the contrast Marx makes between the activity of the spider or the bee and that of 'even the worst architect . . . (who) . . . raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality'. 2

Marx arrived at his notion of labour as a result of his critique of Hegel's idealism. The arguments we wish to advance come to similar conclusions but by a different route. They arise from a critique of one of the most common dilemmas of modern non-Marxist thought, namely that associated with 'linguistic' idealism. This has made its most dramatic appearance in the guise of relativism which came to the fore in many fields in the sixties, all of which supposed that we inhabit the world we are able to discribe rather than, as Berkeley in some ways similarly supposed, the world we are able to perceive. As an intellectual fad, relativism is now something of a spent force, but not we think because the underlying issue on which it capitalized has been squarely faced. Indeed, this was hardly recognized by most of the protagonists in the disputes that relativism engendered. In every case the substantive relativism that was proposed exploited the recalcitrance of the category of meaning in resisting objective determination.

It might not seem immediately clear that this is so. Although two trends can be discerned within linguistic idealism which appear to be sharply at odds, they are actually united on just the point in question. One trend, of which Winch and Feyerabend are notable exponents, indulges with relish in the apparently 'subjective' aspects of linguistic idealism, tilting at pompous proponents of 'Western scientific rationality'. By contrast, it is because meaning does lack any objective external determination that 'structuralist' and 'post-structuralist' writers (e.g. Saussure, Levi-Strauss, Althusser, Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva, and their followers) rest their methods on the claim that structures of meaning in various ways provide their own objective determination from within. In order that such structures can be conceived as being capable of such a feat, it must be supposed that they exist independently of the subjectivity of any person. The individual who uses the code that the structure supplies—in order to say or mean something—is seen, therefore, as wholly secondary to the

* We are very grateful to Lesley Doyal for her detailed editorial assistance.

¹ See R. J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Astron*, London 1972, especially parts I and IV in which he argues that Marxist and analytic philosophers discuss the same subject matter in this connection (without, of course, using quite the same concepts).

² Capital Vol. 1. Lawrence and Wishart, London 1974, p. 174. By the choice of the example of the architect, Marx reveals the influence of the traditional belief that mental activity necessarily precedes manual labour—the view we wish to dispute. For an example of how the view of labour as a secondary construct might be rejected, see L. Kolakowski, 'Karl Marx and the Classical Definition of Truth' in Toward a Marxist Humanim, New York 1969. For the converse see P. Walton and A. Gamble, From Alienation to Surplus Valim, London 1972.

structure itself (whatever form it is supposed to take) and to have little or no epistemological significance.³ Indeed, at one extreme, epistemology is itself dismissed, and it is claimed that '... the entities referred to in discourse are constituted solely in and through the forms of discourse in which they are specified' (thus exactly fitting our parallel between linguistic idealism and Berkeley's 'Esse est peraps'). That portion of the world that it is beyond the capacity of our present 'discourse' or 'conceptual scheme' to describe, is not, however, rendered unreal by our incapacity to describe it, as, effectively, the idealist claims when he savers that what is real depends upon what can be said or written!

Quine's Ontological Relativism

The various proponents of the relativism that ensues employ arguments which turn, in one way or another, on the linguistic co-variability of meaning, belief and reference. It is because of this co-variability that any conceptually or culturally neutral determination of meaning seems such an insurmountable problem. Purely on an analytical level, Quine has most rigorously explored these arguments and their consequences in his thesis of the 'indeterminacy of translation'. He argues that rival conceptual schemes expressible in different languages are always underdetermined by experience. This 'under-determination' is not just inductive, in the sense that conceptual schemes are always more general and therefore more fallible than the particular experiences which confirm them. It is also the case that our capacity to refer to what we believe the world to contain, and our capacity to state what we believe to be true, are both necessarily mediated by the concepts in the language we employ. It is this which sustains the powerful image of our language as a conceptual prison. Since no description of experience can avoid being stated in some language, experience itself cannot arbitrate between the rival conceptual schemes that different languages may contain. Any given domain of experience will be consistent with different and conflicting conceptual schemes. Schemes of translation and, therefore, of communication, can do no more than note the coincidence of utterances with particular circumstances of sensory stimulation. Beyond this, identity of meaning will be indeterminate and, most especially, what speakers of divergent languages suppose they are referring to (and what they believe to exist) will be wholly relative to the conceptual scheme their language embodies. This Quine calls his thesis of 'ontological relativity'.6

³ See P. Winch, 'Understanding a Primitive Society', American Philosophical Quarterly 1, 1964, pp. 307–24, and P. Feyerabend, Against Mothed, New Left Books, London 1975. A useful and related summary of structuralist and post-structuralist writers can be found in A Giddens, Contral Problems In Social Theory, London 1979. Ch. 1. For further illustrations, see: R. Coward and J. Ellis, Language And Materialism. London 1977; D. Silverman and B. Torode, The Material Word, London 1980.

⁴ A. Cutler, B. Hindess, Paul Hirst and A. Hussain, Marx's Capital and Capitalism Today, Vol. One, London 1977. p. 216

⁵ The classic exposition of these views is to be found in W. V. Quine, Word and Object, Cambridge (Mass.) 1960. The best introduction, however, is Ontological Relativity and Other Europ., New York 1969, particularly the title essay.

⁶ Quine distinguishes most forcefully between inductive indeterminacy and that indeterminacy which no set of experiences could, in principle, resolve, in his 'Reply to Chomsky' in D. Davidson and J. Hintikka (eds.), Words and Objections, Dordrecht 1969. pp. 302-315. Some problems with this are raised by M. Dummett in 'The Significance of Quine's Indeterminacy Thesis' in his Truth and Other Engines, London, 1978.

Quine articulates his views on indeterminacy and relativity in the somewhat artificial context of 'radical translation'—a situation where a translator tries to understand an alien culture knowing nothing about it or its language. It is in this context that the idea of a conceptual scheme takes on its clearest meaning. Here Quine's arguments about communication and language lend their most powerful support to the derivative and less sophisticated forms of relativism of recent years. Discourse about debates between 'paradigms' in the history of science, communication between cultures in anthropology, understanding the divergent 'ideologies' of sub-cultures in sociology, and opposing the 'myth of mental illness' in psychology would all fall into this category. Yet despite its explicit or implicit influence, when we examine some of the consequences of Quine's position, it is clear that it—and related formulations of relativism—face serious problems. Two of these in particular will concern us.

First, it seems to follow from Quine's views that it is impossible to distinguish in principle between disagreements concerning matters of fact and misunderstandings of the meaning of what has been said. In a situation of radical translation, the question is raised: Do the aliens really mean what they are apparently claiming about the world or themselves? We may either regard their beliefs as false or we may doubt that we have properly understood them. Kuhn, for example, poses an analogous problem with his famous reference to 'gestalt switches' in discussing the difficulties of communicating between paradigms'. 7 Yet the problem of disagreement/misunderstanding cannot be restricted only to radical translation, since it is just as possible to misunderstand a neighbour as it is an alien. Were the indeterminacy thesis therefore linked to a theory of communication, it would follow that we could never be sure we were communicating with anybody, thus undermining any distinction que communication between ordinary understanding and radical translation. This is the case because, again, for Quine 'communication' amounts to no more than different individuals uttering the same sounds under the same conditions of sensory stimulation. He has, indeed, shown more effectively than anyone that there are no objectively determinable 'meanings' to utterances that are shared by two or more speakers of different (or the same) language, over and above their shared circumstances of sensory stimulation. It is with respect to such circumstances that the sense of their utterances is indeterminate. But what, then, is conveyed when we speak, such that something might turn on agreement or disagreement, in contrast to understanding or misunderstanding what is said? That is to say that, since some understanding is necessary for anything to be conveyed about which there might be agreement or disagreement, it is unclear from Quine's account what the object of this

⁷ T. S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago 1965, pp. 110–134. The controversy concerning relativism that this book helped to start is reviewed for instance in W. H. Newton-Smith, The Rationality of Science, London 1981. The idealism implicit in these views is made clear by R. Rorty in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nation, Oxford 1980, pp. 257–311. The most powerful formulations of such idealism are in B. Barnes, Scientific Revolution and Social Theory, London 1974; and D. Bloor, Knowledge and Social Integry, London 1976.

⁸ For similar points developed rigorously, see D. Davidson, 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 17, 1973-4, p. 11. Davidson's views are penetratingly discussed in R. Rorty, op. cit

agreement might be. Our agreement must amount to more than the mere fact that we all happen to make the same sounds under the same stimulus conditions, like a flock of identically trained parrots who all 'agree' on the proposition 'Pretty Polly'.

So, and this is our second point, two consequences flow from this for the possibility of our understanding cultural and conceptual change. Such changes ought to be both unintelligible in their content and inexplicable in their motivation. Suppose that Quine is right, and the sole criterion for agreement/understanding is no more than saying the same under the same stimulus conditions. It then follows that any change in what is said is ex bypothen unintelligible, because we now no longer do say the same under the same stimulus conditions. More strictly, by his criterion we could make no distinction between our doubting the truth of our former opinions and our ceasing to understand what we used to say-precisely the dilemma that Kuhn suggests with regard to scientific revolutions. Moreover, were this an adequate account of what is real and rational, wholly determined by existing culture, what could motivate intellectual or social change, much less allow the all important identification of what might or might not be progressive in any such change? If one were confined within a 'conceptual prison' but had no way of knowing it, then 'getting out' would have no meaning and no one would ever want to do so.9

So there is a sense in which communication between neighbours and across cultures west amount to more than utterance of the same sounds under the same conditions. Were this not so between neighbours, it is no longer clear what 'communication' would mean. And given their propensity for graphic anthropological illustration, relativists also apparently believe that radically different cultures can be understood. Similarly, no one would deny that we are now capable of doing things which were previously believed to be impossible and that these new choices often reflect progressive change. Agreement or disagreement on such matters involves what we know how to do and must carry more burden than is revealed by the coincidence of utterances with stimulus conditions.

The same point applies to cultures denied these choices. Their inhabitants may indeed be blinded to them by their conceptual schemes but it is a backhanded form of imperialism and racism to claim that they do not need to make choices as much as we do and did and cannot in principle learn to make them. For example, if the 'natural' life expectancy in a given culture is accepted by its inhabitants to be forty years then can it be anything other than racist to argue that they (or an anthropologist observing them) must be content with doing nothing about it. Since the availability of choices is predicated on beliefs about what is possible and since some beliefs offer more than others in this respect, the extension of choice in history has reflected what Hegel called 'the march of reason . . .' through it. The problem of the rational assessment of human activity is not whether or not it is possible but why it has already occurred and how

⁹ For a recent exposition of these points, see Newton-Smith, op. cit Also, for a similar analysis concerning the problem of human needs, see L. Doyal and L Gough, "The Politics of Human Needs" (forthcoming).

it can be continued. Somehow, the actualities of such assessment and of associated human communication must be reconciled with an understanding of the correct philosophical implications of the indeterminacy of translation.

Pettit and Macdonald have recently suggested a more fruitful approach to this problem. 10 They claim that common practical activity is at the heart of successful translation and the rational assessment of rival cultural practices. Their key point is that there are some forms of practical activity that are undeniably the same for different cultures, and that once this is accepted, conceptual schemes which make possible a greater variety of such activity—and thus more choice—can be regarded as more rational than their competitors. In this article we shall argue that understanding any language depends upon a prior grasp of a range of practical activities which are intelligible to some degree in and of themselves. We will try to show that an approach of this kind makes it possible to shift the ground of rational debate and assessment outside the closed circle of a single conceptual scheme, without relativising it to the pragmatic success of such practical activities. If we succeed in this respect, it will follow that it is activities of this kind, and not language or thought, which constitute the basis for the intelligibility of social life, and of the material world in which social life is lived. Practical activities having this intelligibility in and of themselves would be the real basis of social life not just in the sense that they are necessary to sustain our lives, but also in the more profound sense that as a theoretical category—'labour'—they must be at the root of whatever understanding of social life we may possess as participants or as social scientists.

Radical Translation and 'Constitutive Activities'

Some activities would obviously be impossible to identify—much less to join in with—without having some prior understanding of related cultural rules. In this sense, such activities can be said to be culturally specific. Examples will range over those practices which give a culture its particular identity. Thus games, rituals, cosmologies—the spectrum of customs which are characteristically 'local'—are all culturally specific in this sense. It is these activities which are employed with such effect by writers like Winch and Douglas in illustrating their relativistic arguments. 11 The rational appraisal of such activities may or may not be of interest. To the extent that the problem is merely the identification of alien activities, the question of rational assessment is defined simply with reference to the success of related translations. The conceptual scheme which one begins to understand as a result may well hold little interest beyond linguistic curiosity. If it holds more, prompting a desire to appraise the merits of supernaturalistic versus naturalistic approaches to understanding and treating illness, then it follows all the more that accurate translation is imperative. More specifically, until one develops the linguistic competence to identify potions, charms, spells and things natural as opposed to supernatural, it will be impossible even to describe

G. Macdonald and P. Pettit, Sementies and Social Science, London 1981, pp. 26-29.
 See B. Wilson (ed.), Rationality, Oxford 1970, which contains a number of interesting articles on this issue. Cf. M. Douglas, Implicit Mosange. London, 1975, pp. 203-276.

what is going on much less to evaluate it. Therefore, the problem for both relativist and non-relativist becomes how the radical translator can gain entry into the alien language without already knowing something of alien rules—for the relativist a contradiction in terms. 12

One thing is clear. Unless communication of some form is possible prior to learning the language, radical translation cannot get off the ground. That is to say, it will be necessary to have the confidence that a translation bridgehead exists which is not language-dependent. Otherwise, translators would have no way of identifying themselves as humans—much less as friends—or more importantly, no way of assessing the very first translation hypothesis on which their later work must build. ¹³ In short, they must presuppose that there are some alien activities which are the same as their own and for which alien language-use translationally correlates in some measure with their own.

Were this not the case, translators would be confronted with a linguistic labyrinth which could neither be entered nor left by those already inside. These practices about which a measure of agreement can be said to exist prior to translation we shall call 'constitutive activities'. Both translator and alien will already have theories in their respective languages about the nature of these activities because it will be recognized that any form of human life will require them in some way or other for physical survival. For example, whatever their cultural background, both translator and aliens will share a certain measure of understanding of the distinctively human and social ways of doing a variety of different sorts of things (e.g. eating, sleeping, agricultural production, reproducing, construction, sheltering, healing, playing, etc.). None of these can be done in just any old way. They are constrained by the laws of nature, as they affect, for instance, human biology and health, the communication of certain types of emotion, processes of agricultural and technological production, and the possibility of representing, communicating and storing information.

This picture of a kind of consistency in certain types of social practice should, however, be contrasted with the reactionary notion of the unchanging 'human condition'. Of course, the laws of nature do not change, but the ways in which they constrain us do—through the bounds of both our theoretical and practical understanding. For example, the mechanism of human reproduction remains unchanged and does present what are regarded as absolute limitations on what can be done (e.g. no immaculate conceptions) as well as an important link with our evolutionary past. Yet even in reproduction, modern technology (contraception, artificial insemination and amniocentesis) has altered the material constraints that we experience. Much the same can be said for old age,

¹³ The palaco-anthropologist or archaeologist distinguishes the remains of purple from those of advanced apes by means of non-linguistic evidence of intelligible activity: tool-making, and so on.

¹² Hollis and Lükes introduce the idea of a 'translation bridgehead', which we shall use below, but which they argue is logical in character; unless the alien language conforms to the same basic logical principles as that of the translator, it will not even be recognizable as a language. The difficulty with this position is that it still leaves open the possibility of 'disagreement/misunderstanding' about everything else that is statable within either language. See their essays in B. Wilson, op. cit.

pain and pleasure, in contrast to the general powerlessness and passivity of *all* living creatures in the face of forces beyond all hope of control. Without proper differentiation, both types of constraint are introduced into a materialist conception of the human condition by Timpanaro.¹⁴ Later we will clarify the concept of constraint in this respect and further attempt to demarcate what is distinctively human from the background context of invariant laws of nature common to all living things.

Returning, therefore, to the question of what is and what is not a constitutive activity, the key test of whether or not such an activity has successfully been identified will be the translator's ability to join in it—correctly perceiving what does and does not constitute success—without necessarily saying anything. Only then will it be possible to resolve those seemingly insurmountable ambiguities of reference posed by Quine's favourite example of pointing and naming. 15 Since the alien might always seem to be referring to one thing (e.g. a rabbit) only to be later discovered to refer to another (e.g., a particular rabbit part) it will only be against the background of practical agreement that an accurate decision about what is being named will be reached.

So before it is possible, say, to identify a culturally specific activity like decorating shelters it will be necessary to recognize the constitutive activity of building shelters as such. Then what counts as decorative, rather than structural, may be distinguished. Imagine the translator confronted with the construction of a new hut in a strange culture. Many things will already be known about such construction (e.g., how to hold a support while a roof member is being positioned). Without saying anything, it will be possible in principle to join in and help, thereby communicating that something is understood of what is going on and—by implication—that translators use shelters too. It is this prior intelligibility which puts the translator in a position to try to translate some of the alien language associated with constitutive building activity—for example, their words for 'roof', 'support', 'walls', for the materials and actions involved, and for the identification of the grammatical character of their utterances. The same will go for other activities, less narrowly economic, which the translator might share with the aliens: respect for the dead, making music, cooking food and so on.

Thus in testing the translation hypothesis in this way more is being done than pointing, naming or asserting or, as Quine would have it, recording alien 'patterns of assent and denial'. ¹⁶ Language-use here entails the

¹⁴ S. Timpanaro, On Materialism, New Left Books, London 1975. Raymond Williams, writing about Timpanaro's work, has pointed out that the placing of humanity within, yet in some sense demarcated from nature, presents any senious materialism with the most profound problems. He is much clearer on how much turns on this than he is on how it might be resolved. See his "Timpanaro's Materialist Challenge', New Left Rosen 109, pp. 3-17. For a discussion of the problematic relationship between animal 'behaviour' and human 'action', see M. Midgley, Beart and Man, Hassocks 1978. Cf. the related review of the contemporary philosophy of action by R. J. Bernstein in The Restricturing of Social and Political Theory, Philadelphia 1978, Part II

¹⁵ Quine, West and Object, Ch. II and the essay 'Ontological Relativity'. The discussion which follows about why this is so derives initially from considerations raised in the early parts of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations (trains G E M. Anscombe), Oxford 1913 ¹⁶ Quine, op. cit. Also see the related discussion in J Hintikka, 'Behavioural Criteria of Radical Translation' in D. Davidson and J Hintikka, op. cit.

active are of language to do things—to accomplish goals which are to some degree already understood (e.g., successfully communicating about how best to support a roof, level a floor, etc.). In a translational inquiry restricted to predicting patterns of assent and denial under given conditions of sensory stimulation, there will indeed be an infinite variety of ambiguities which will prohibit the certain identification of alien concepts. For example, the translation of 'roof' is indeterminate in this sense. It will always be possible that, among other things, the alien means 'roof part', 'thatch', or 'what is going to keep me dry' by the word which the translator takes to mean roof when s/he points at one. However, indeterminacy will become increasingly less probable as we come to understand the part that alien language plays in the accomplishment of constitutive activities. In the roof example, for instance, a translation will eventually be adopted through attempting to use the suspected word for 'roof' in the context of actually or hypothetically joining in roof construction, roof repair, etc. Thus, it is when something practically turns on using words that translators acquire what we could term a cutting edge concerning ostensive ambiguity. Since relevant practical activities will be constitutive in character and joining in will be possible without the use of language, it will be possible from the beginning of the translation exercise to agree—to some extent at least—with the aliens about what needs to be done and about how they use language to do it. This has to be seen as a very different kind of activity from merely pointing things out and naming them.

Similarly, in Quine's famous example, it may be the case that 'rabbit', 'rabbit part', 'rabbit moment', etc. are all possible equivalents for 'gavagai' where the translator is simply being shown round the alien's forest. 17 But the same would not hold for the 'gavagai' on the dinner table. Try eating a 'rabbit moment' or 'a glimpse of rabbit' or suggesting that the alien do sol Further, it would not be advisable in such circumstances to mistake the whole rabbit for the appropriate part of the animal which local etiquette demands to be eaten first. Constitutive activities will no doubt be described in the alien language and in the language of the translator. But, unlike culturally specific activities which are subject to indefinite variations, constitutive activities present a constancy which does not change with language. For example, one cannot build or use language to build a shelter unless certain requirements are met. This is true regardless of how the world from which one shelters is understood. A 'shelter' which provides no actual shelter is no shelter at all, for anyone. If this is what the aliens are making (e.g., a structure that consistently falls down as soon as it is completed) then their activity has simply been misidentified as shelter-building. And if an alien language contains no elements which actually facilitate the construction of shelters—some societies after all do not bother—then it does not contain elements which can be translated into the English vocabulary of shelter-building. Constitutive activities do not have to be universal to mankind in order to serve the function we have allotted to them. Which activities of the translator's society overlap with those of the aliens will be a contingent matter. An immediately intelligible activity for you, dropped in a society without a word of their language, might be buying

¹⁷ Quine, op cit.

and selling—by no means an activity universally practised in human societies. On the other hand a truly universal activity like childbirth might be—as it has been in some societies—so exclusive a female preserve that no male translator would put it to use in establishing a translation bridgehead.

As far as culturally specific activities are concerned, it appears that we may do or say anything we like in that there seems no a priori constraint upon mythological imagination. Yet those activities are only made materially possible by the constitutive activities of the society involved and there are a range of natural constraints upon such activity. For example, the successful use of any language in the constitutive activity of shelter-building will depend not just upon what is sayable within the language, but also upon what environmentally and physically can be done and the type of and extent of understanding of these constraints. This, in turn, will only become evident in what, for example, actors produce. 18 So again, as with other constitutive activities, to the extent that people produce the same sorts of artefacts and engage in the same sorts of purposeful productive processes, they can be said to agree with one another. In so far as we, as translators, can share and participate successfully in these activities, we can in fact agree with them—rather than merely seeming to. From that real agreement, disagreements—as distinct from misunderstandings—can come to be recognized and translators can move towards real competence in an alien language. Of course, it may then be discovered that alien beliefs are vastly different and there will no doubt be cases where disagreement and misunderstanding are hard to disentangle. However if translators have spent days helping aliens build shelters, hunt game, and carry out other constitutive activities before becoming sufficiently fluent in their language to discuss their beliefs about magic, spirits, etc., then there seems to be a way out of the original dilemma of translation. The possibility of confusing misunderstanding with disagreement may extend to a debate about why, for instance, their hunt was successful. Does, say, the 'deer spirit' really give them their quarry or not? But what translators will not discover, after chasing a deer all day, killing it and eating it with aliens, is that a misunderstanding has occurred and that they were not hunting at all.

The Problem of Language Learning

Thus far we have shown that in order for radical translation to take place at all—much less to achieve any degree of success—there must be a measure of agreement between translator and alien both about what is being done and the way language is being used to do it. Constitutive activities afford the opportunity for establishing a 'bridgehead' of interpretation into an alien language through their being to some degree intelligible prior to any grasp of the alien language. Such activities also constitute the social context within which language is learned by children within their own culture. In developing this argument, language acquisition has so far been equated with radical translation since this is such a useful test-bed for the consideration of problems concerning

¹⁸ See the treatment of labour in the opening passages of *The German Ideology*, London 1970, especially pp. 42 and 47

meaning, indeterminacy and truth. Yet this equation is highly problematic. If ambiguities of ostensive reference create such formidable obstacles for radical translators already in possession of linguistic expertise, then infants faced with the same ambiguities and with no linguistic clues to go on would presumably be silenced for ever. Since this is clearly not the case, it has been argued that Quine's behaviouristic analysis of language learning cannot be reconciled with his indeterminacy thesis. ¹⁹ We now go on to show further how referential ambiguity underlines the necessity for a practical context of agreement between teacher and language learner.

Quine argues that once the infant has learned to apply a specific name (e.g. 'blue' or 'cat') correctly to an appropriate experience, it can then apply it to other 'similar' experiences through deciding whether or not the new sufficiently conforms to the old. So when faced, for example, with a different shade of blue or a different type of cat from those involved in its original linguistic conditioning, somehow the infant possesses the innate capacity to 'see' appropriate similarities and dissimilarities. On the basis of this capacity, it will then inductively generalize and use 'blue' or 'cat' correctly or incorrectly as the case may be. 20 This is implausible. On the one hand, some names (e.g., cat) will be used to refer to a wide variety of experiences. On the other hand, different names (e.g., 'turquoise', 'blue') will be employed to refer to experiences which are in fact very similar. So even if an infant were conditioned to use the word 'blue' to apply to one shade of blue, why assume that it will be able to do so for all of these other shades to which it has not been exposed? Similarly, if the infant were confronted with other names applied to shades which were quite close to the one with which it had started, would this not destroy any consistent conditioning that had already been established? Thus ostensive reference alone—even with consistent patterns of reinforcement—seems too ambiguous to constitute the foundation for even the simplest aspects of language learning.21

Behaviourism succeeds no better in explaining the acquisition of the capacity to combine words in a grammatical way. Again, for Quine, the innate capacity for inductive generalization provides the mechanism. For instance, the infant first learns words such as 'foot', 'hurt' or 'hand'. Positive reinforcement occurs when 'foot hurts' is asserted in appropriate circumstances and the same happens when 'hand hurts' is analogically substituted in a similarly relevant situation. So, it is argued, the infant is conditioned to combine words and to look for analogies and its understanding of syntax can be reduced to reinforced grammatical habits which work in conjunction with its innate inductive capacities. Therefore, the child learns the specific grammar it does because its linguistic experiences are contingently what they are. Yet the infant's initial experiences of grammar are just as ambiguous as its first encounters with names. Consider, for example, the difference between naming and asserting. Why should the infant ever learn to separate or positively distinguish between 'foot' and 'hurts' as a name (i.e. 'foot hurts') for the

²¹ Harrison, op. cit, pp. 58-62.

¹⁹ For example see B Harrison, Mosning and Structure, London 1972, Ch IV.

²⁰ W. V. Quine, The Rests of Reference, La Salle 1974 Chs. I and IL.

pain in its foot? Simply on the basis of repeated utterances, its parents will be unable to discern which use is which and will inevitably reward correct and incorrect uses. Presumably it will also be just as unclear to the child what it is being rewarded for. Indeed, even if the infant does correctly combine one set of words in a way which consistently suggests that it is following a specific grammatical rule, the same ambiguity will arise when it attempts to combine others in accordance with the same rule (e.g. 'hand hurts'). As they stand, the linguistic responses of both parents and children remain indeterminate and there is no clear pattern of positive or negative reinforcement from which to learn. ²²

There can be no doubt that ostensive reference is indeterminate, as Ouine suggests. But there is equally no doubt that since language is successfully learned, indeterminacy is somehow resolved in practice. It is the nature of this 'practice' which must be clarified. As with the case of the radical translator, the practice does not initially consist in the activity of pointing, naming and recording the patterns of assent and denial of those who seem to be using names in hypothesized ways. Rather it involves using language to do things which have already been learned.²³ For example, in English the language of tools is subject to all of the referential ambiguities which we have already described. Infants do not learn which things are 'hammers' because they are consistently called as such and bear a perceptual similarity to other objects which are also referred to in the same way. Indeterminacy is too great on too many levels for this to be possible. Learning the language is in fact preceded by learning (or at least recognizing how) to hammer and understanding that the rules associated with ascribing the name in question relate not just to perception but to 2 network of practical activity on which the success and failure of language use will turn. Try hammering (nails, for instance) with a mallet and see how quickly it becomes clear that they are very similar but different sorts of things. Without the capacity successfully to participate in some activities prior to learning the associated language, the infant will not be in a position to test what is and what is not linguistically appropriate to those activities with anything like the degree of determinacy that characterizes linguistic understanding. It is not sensory stimulation as such that is relevant to such judgements; rather it is what the child and others are doing that focuses its attention on what others might be speaking about. On its own, the sensory input of the child is simply too rich and continuous to provide a focus for its attention.

²² Ibid., pp. 78–90 For further critical exposition of Quine's views, c.f. B. Harrison, As Introduction to the Philosophy of Language, London 1979, Ch. VII; and S. Davia, Philosophy and Language, Indianapolis, 1976, Ch. V. Both have excellent bibliographics.

A point Praget insists upon in, for instance, Six Psychological Stubus, New York 1967, p. 11. Heidegger, to whom we are also greatly indebted, stresses the importance of practical activity but in much broader epistemological and ontological terms. For example, he states 'In dealings... our concern subordinates itself to the "in-order-to" which is constitutive for the equipment we are employing at the time; the less we just stare at the hammer-Thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is—as equipment. Being and Time (trans. J. Macquarine and E. Robinson), New York 1962, p. 98. For a detailed analysis of this and other relevant aspects of Heidegger's writing, particularly as they compare with Wittgenstein's, see G. F. Sefler, Language and the World, Atlantic Highlands 1974 Chs. IV and VI

The Problem of Rationality

So we would argue that both translators and infants develop general linguistic competence through identifying and participating in constitutive activities. If translator and alien can be said rationally to appraise such activities prior to the development of linguistic competence then the rationality of appraisal cannot, as relativists suggest, be predicated on indigenous language use. This certainly appears to be the case in practice. For example, there are some ways in which a shelter just cannot be built, or crops grown or sickness healed—whatever the culture and whatever the language. Crops cannot be grown through burning them, nor sickness healed through cutting off the patient's head. Prior to the acquisition of linguistic competence, a radical translator participating in constitutive activity will therefore be able recognizably to do the right thing (e.g., holding a support at just the right angle to position the roof properly) or, of course, the wrong thing. It will also be possible to show better ways of accomplishing agreed aims which aliens will accept and adopt—or to recognize the limitations of one's own methods.

This kind of debate can occur in practice because, by hypothesis, some constitutive activities sufficiently coincide between such culture. If the shelter is built (or the crops grow or the sickness is healed) to the joint satisfaction of translator and alien then practical communication is clearly occurring. Where there are disagreements or misunderstandings in practice, then they can be resolved through practice. For Quine's dilemma of radical translation to arise, some attempt must be made to communicate with language about the reasons for success or failure. Disagreement can obviously be mistaken for misunderstanding and vice versa. However, in the above example of rational communication in the practice of construction, linguistic competence between translator and alien has, ex hypothesi, not yet evolved. What can it mean to suggest that when such competence is acquired, translator and alien then learn that they have really been misunderstanding each other all along, despite persistent successful resolutions of their practical problems?

Once linguistic competence is acquired—and the test of this will be the translator's ability to use alien language in the execution of further constitutive activities—it will be possible to begin to ask questions. This will enable discussion of why the aliens engage in such activities in their own particular ways. Their answers will reveal the rules which they perceive themselves to be following and the beliefs about the world which they exhibit in so doing. In this respect, even though their activity is constitutive (e.g., seed planting) its associated language is not. Again, we can say almost anything about what we do and why. Provided that nothing constitutively binges on what is said, then questions of rational appraisal do not arise. So, suppose the translator does not agree with the supernaturalistic explanation of an illness. If aliens are healthy in ways that both translator and alien accept (i.e., neither would attempt in their own culturally specific ways to intervene), rational debate will prove futile. For in the cycles of health and illness jointly perceived as obtaining for particular cultures, there is no practical reason for, say, a traditional healer to consider Western medical views. In these cases, traditional methods will seem to work and the ostensible successes of Western

medicine can always be explained away. And vice versa. Parity of this sort is seldom if ever found between cultures; but **e***, including our own, has a monopoly of wisdom, or ignorance. 24

Yet, suppose that through more and more determinate translation, the translator does indeed understand that elaborate shelter decorations are attempts to ward off evil spirits believed to be responsible for a new illness. Suppose further that despite such decorations, the aliens are distressed by a rapid increase in the illness. Suppose finally that from the perspective of Western medicine, the translator correctly diagnoses that the illness is a form of dysentery which can be successfully treated with available antibiotics. It is at this stage of their possible intervention where something might constitutively turn on the differences between their conceptual schemes that the translator and alien might well engage in rational debate. Using newly acquired linguistic competence, translators will be able to communicate disagreement with alien healing methods and to suggest the superiority of their own in this case. More specifically, they will be in a position to assert intelligibly that the physical administration of a certain substance will stop the illness. From the perspective of the aliens, there is nothing in principle to suggest that the substance will not be tried provided enough is perceived to turn on taking the translator seriously. There is no more reason to doubt this than to doubt that Western doctors would do the same under similar circumstances. If the translator's prescribed treatment is consistently successful in the face of the alien's, there is equally nothing in principle to suggest that it will not be adopted in place of the old healing practice.²⁵

In short, despite culturally specific differences which might remain between them, the translator and alien can agree, disagree and debate about what is to be done in particular circumstances. To the extent that their debate reaches a conclusion which is then consistently acted upon by both, they have recognizably disagreed—in the same way in principle in which neighbours might—and have resolved their disagreement in a rational manner. Of course, the resolution is not the same as a crucial experiment: any more than the fact that acupuncture works is taken as a refutation of conventional physiological theories. Rational solutions to particular problems, even in science, must be relative to the state of knowledge in general. There is no necessity to deny that a solution is rational just because it cannot be shown that it is binding once and for all. Were this not the case, the history of Western thought would amount to a long sequence of one stupid mistake after another: only what we think today could be rational.

²⁴ Thus, of course, is the situation so often referred to in anthropological discussions of rationality. The work of Evans-Pritchard has been most influential in this respect. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchersft, Oracles and Magic Amongst the Azanda, Oxford 1937; Norr Religion, Oxford 1936. The ensuing debates are discussed in MacDonald and Petrit, op cit. Ch I. Also see R. Horton, 'Lévy-Bruhl, Durkheim, and the Scientific Revolution' in R. Horton and R. Finnegan (eds.), Modes of Thought, London 1973

²⁵ Many attempts, for example, to formulate enterts of 'primary health care' implicitly rest on the existence of a constitutive dimension to health practices. Among other things, they represent one measure of economic exploitation or progress. For example, see 'Primary Health Care' Report of the International Conference on Primary Health Care, Alma-Alta, 6–12, 1978, World Health Organization, Geneva 1978.

Thus, there is no difference in principle between convincing aliens non-verbally that three supports are better than two in the construction of shelters and convincing them in practice which includes language that pills of a certain kind are more effective than decorated shelters in healing certain jointly accepted manifestations of ill-health. As far as constitutive activities are concerned, language can be regarded as just as much of a tool 28, say, 2 lever. With its help, goals can be achieved which recognizably demand the same action irrespective of culture. Constitutive debate which employs language is thus qualitatively the same as non-verbal constitutive debate about the efficiency of tools. Without understanding the use of the lever, one person might be convinced that a particular task is impossible. Another, who does understand its use can show the first the incorrectness of his/her position without necessarily saying anthing. 26 Similarly, aliens might well believe a certain task to be impossible (e.g. one concerning agricultural yield) because its successful completion is apparently incompatible with their beliefs. As in the case of the lever, it is possible for translators to show the superiority of their linguistic tools (e.g., of their theories about how to increase agricultural yield) and for aliens to recognize this superiority in the manner already described. Translators can also learn from aliens and for the same reasons. Both, of course, may decide for other reasons (e.g. religious, economic, political) not to implement their new technical expertise.

Once it is accepted that a measure of linguistic communication has been established, we have already indicated that hard cases will obviously arise where misunderstanding and disagreement still threaten to be indistinguishable. But such problems will only arise where an aim is to some extent already shared by both translator and alien. Where aims are admittedly culturally specific (e.g., those embodied in the game of cricket), translators may not understand, but they will have nothing to disagree about. Questions of disagreement arise about the accomplishment of a shared purpose (e.g. childbirth, buying and selling, curing, cultivation, hunting, building) which turns in part upon being able reliably to predict future events of certain types either with or without a measure of human intervention. In cases like this, a resolution of the issues does not take place in terms of arbitration by objectively neutral observation. Rather, it occurs relative to the provisional agreement between both parties about what it is that they are doing or attempting to do. This kind of resolution in practice does not bring to translation that determinacy envisaged by those who hanker after objective criteria of synonomy and an once-and-for-all decision procedure for science. However, it does define the direction that must be taken for even greater precision to be brought to the interpretation of what others say and to the understanding which is possible of the world.

Conceptual Change, Ideology and Practice

Constitutive activities—the practical agreements on which we have

²⁶ Ironically, again, this is just what might appear to be suggested by the example, from 'Shane', which Winch uses in *The Idea of a Social Science*, London 1938, p. 129. Yet this reference occurs in the chapter in which he argues (p. 123). 'If social relations between men exist only in and through their ideas, then, since the relations between ideas are internal relations, social relations must be a species of internal relation too.'

predicated our cursory treatment of translation, language acquisition and rational appraisal—also serve a crucial role in conceptual innovation. In some ways this is the most interesting aspect of such activities and the one which most justifies the title 'constitutive'. It is our claim that continuity of communication across generations, cultural divides and conceptual changes, alike, has a non-arbitrary foundation in prior agreement in practical activity of some kind. This foundation is non-arbitrary because the world, regardless of how or whether we understand it, places constraints upon the possible forms of practical agreement we may reach with one another. The material reality of such constraints, along with their being recognizable because they will have been experienced in practice, is what allows us to speak of a sense in which people may join in the same activity independently of the terms they may use to frame their intentions. Therefore, it is only in relation to the obstinacy of the material world that we can have some token that there is a measure of real agreement between human beings, rather than its mere semblance.

'Obstinacy' because the world resists us, rather than imposing itself on our passive minds or nervous systems. It is in relation to that resistance that we can agree. Agreement is not being stamped in the same mould, as the passive recipients of the impressions and forming influences of the environment must be. As we have seen, we do not agree with one another merely in virtue of saying the same things under the same circumstances, any more than books from the same printing, or records from the same press 'agree'. Rather it is because the world resists our actions in the same ways that what we do can become concerted, rather than merely similar; and it is in relation to our acting in concert that the point of assertion, assent, denial, truth and falsity acquires its purchase. It is not quite the pun that it at first appears to say that truth and falsity would not have the bearing that they do upon meaning and understanding if they did not matter. If nothing anyone ever did turned on anything that was said then the meaning of what you said and of what you understood others to say could be anything you pleased—words would mean what you meant them to mean. This being said, material constraints associated with constitutive activities only emerge as such, and become intelligible, in the context of the historical development of human practical activity. In the case of each such constraint, its commonality extends, whatever its range, over the participants in some particular human practice. The totality of such practices, past and present, constitutes an interwoven fabric, connected at the point of each constraint with the laws of nature, including, of course, those which have yet to be discovered. Throughout the whole of this fabric, few, if any constitutive activities extend as unbroken or uniform threads. Put this way it becomes clear that practical agreements are evolutionary in character and can in no sense be complete or permanent; and it is this that leads us to the issue of conceptual innovation.

Imagine two scientists who collaborate for years until one day they disagree over the significance of some observation or theoretical criticism, assuming that this does not result from some simple error they could both acknowledge—an error of calculation, for instance. One decides that their existing theory should be retained, and a way found to accommodate the point, while the other is convinced that a radical

revision is required. Does this disagreement reveal that all along, despite their collaboration, they had held quite different theories—that they had never really agreed with one another? Clearly, before their disagreement, they had agreed as far as it was possible to agree and subsequently, however profound their dispute, they still agree on what they were and are trying to accomplish. For example, it is not as though they were like two players at a chequered board waking up to the fact that one was playing chess and the other draughts. We do not have to descend to the rock bottom of hunting, shelter-building and the like to find that it is the non-arbitrary shared practice of the scientists (e.g., what they succeed in making and/or manipulating when they conduct an experiment) which mediates between the disparities of belief and/or conceptual understanding with which they carry on their disagreement. Through such practices, two theories can be related to one another as rivals, regardless of the divergencies between their conceptual foundations. For this reason, the practical agreements in constitutive activities will always be partly invisible. Their nature will not be captured completely by any statement of the purposes they are believed to serve nor by the account given of how these purposes are accomplished. The discovery of new ways to accomplish them is thus left open and may occur in fields as specialized as atomic physics or as broad as the organization of productive labour within capitalism.27

With this in mind, we are now in a position to give a far broader characterization of constitutive activities than we have thus far. They constitute those areas of human practical agreement which make specific forms of cultural life materially possible and which therefore call for the imputation to them of rules which will maximize their success in this respect. This being said, they neither dictate precisely the rules that shall be imputed to them, nor can they be exhaustively characterized (as culturally specific activities can) by the particular rules which are held to govern them. Consider a firm that makes tools for example. On the one hand tool-making is a constitutive activity if ever there was one. It transcends both cultural barriers and conceptual innovations to provide a broad continuity of intelligibility as the same activity regardless of the different ways in which it may be understood. On the other hand, the registration of a tool firm as a limited company with all the specifications of its existence as a legal entity—its responsibilities under English law to its employees, customers and creditors—is clearly culturally specific. The framework of specificity might change if, for instance, the firm became a publicly quoted company, or were nationalized. Historically, of course, such companies developed from the medieval system of guilds, masters, journeymen and apprentices—further examples of cultural specificity while the activity of tool-making has itself materially altered and become more refined. Yet we can easily see the continuity of tool-making through the development from a simple smithy to a nationalized machine-tool company, through a number of intermediate changes to the specific rules by which tool-making was progressively understood.

This example shows how much broader the scope of conceptual

²⁷ Similar arguments are employed by S. Toulmin in his critique of Kuhn in *Hamas Understanding*, Vol. 1, Oxford 1972, pp. 98–130

innovation is than the usual examples drawn by philosophers from the history of science. Indeed our notions of practical agreement and constitutive activity are closely allied to Wittgenstein's 'form of life' and to the analysis of practical activity in some of the early writings of Marx. The notion of a form of life is by no means self-explanatory, however. While some writers have treated it as a mere mélange of the conceptual and practical aspects of social life, two distinct trends are discernible in the writings of those who have sought to explain the idea. On the one hand, it is taken to be a covert conceptual agreement instantiated in a set of rules—a successor to contractual theories of social life. The other trend is to adopt a naturalistic interpretation of it as part of human ethology. Both interpretations are fundamentally misconceived. The thesis of conceptual agreement ignores the fact that rules abstracted from practice themselves take on a sort of indeterminacy. For example, in a famous argument, Wittgenstein shows that even with the apparently rigid rules of mathematics, what it means for an uninitiate to 'go on in the same way' cannot be coherently established without reference to an existing mode of related social practice. In this sense, the intentional content of the rule—in effect, its interpretation—derives from the practice and not vice verse. The thesis that forms of life are naturalistically determined is just as problematic. For there to be an intelligible rule, it has to be possible to do what the rule commands ('ought implies can'). But equally it must be possible to do what the rule forbids, as it makes no more sense to forbid what is impossible than it does to command it. Hence following or breaking a rule must be compatible with all laws of nature. Natural laws cannot in turn, therefore, determine whether or which rules shall be followed or broken. 28

For these reasons, our interpretation of a form of life makes it clear that the traditional division between manual and mental labour is predicated on the prior intelligibility of practical activity. Thus, expressions in our language take on their sense only in relation to 'the whole of the rest of the mechanism' in Wittgenstein's phrase. The parts of the mechanism which tend to escape the attention of the philosopher are the practical contexts in which language plays a part. This must mean that the entire organization of practical activity at a given time has a bearing upon the sense that expressions of this language may have. Hence, it should be expected that major changes in such organization will call for major conceptual changes. Again, this is not to claim that practical activity determines concepts in some mechanical fashion. Alterations in practice can call for the invention of techniques and rules concerning their meaning and use without specifying how human creativity will respond if

²⁸ For the classic example of the 'conceptual' interpretation of Wittgenstein's notion of a 'form of life', see Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science*. For the naturalistic interpretation, see: B. Stroud, 'Wittgenstein and Logical Necessity' in G. Pitcher (ed.), Wittgenstein, New York 1966, pp. 477–97. An excellent general analysis of Wittgenstein's views in this respect, to which we are indebted, can be found in H. F. Pitkin, Wittgenstein and Justice University of California Press, Berkeley, 1972, pp. 132–139. See also pages 324 and 340, where parallels with Marx are drawn Purther companions between Marx and Wittgenstein can be found in D. Rubenstein, Marx and Wittgenstein, London 1981, especially Ch. X. Gaidens in his writings on social theory acknowledges the importance of the notion of a 'form of life', recognizing that it must involve more than mere conceptual agreement, yet not drawing the conclusions we would wish here. See, for example, his Control Problems in Social Theory, pp. 61–68.

at all. All we can say when we (quite intelligibly) describe a new way of understanding social life, or the natural world, as a response to a problem (whether explicitly perceived or not) is that this new understanding was prompted, or called for by that problem, but not caused or entailed by it—it might after all, have gone unabled. Similarly, innovators may not foresee the material or social consequences of their creations. Thus to call a concept 'ideological' because it can be seen to have been called for by the exigencies of practical life, does not imply that its significance and efficacy are wholly relative to the particular interests of the originators of that idea—any more than the significance or efficacy of inventions like the wheel or the differential calculus can be determined solely by asking whether or not they served the original purpose of their inventor.

So it is immensely plausible to suppose that there existed mutually reinforcing influences linking the rise of modern science and the transformation of our view of the universe to the Renaissance, the age of exploration and colonization, the Reformation, the rise of mercantile capitalism and the decline of feudalism. The science of the socially static and hierarchical medieval world envisaged the universe too as static and hierarchically ordered according to Divine purpose. This view was displaced by one which sought instead to understand the impersonal framework of causal laws which governed all natural events. The former science placed humanity at the centre of the universe but subordinate to the Divine purpose exemplified by birth, growth, death, the seasons and the fruitfulness of the Earth. It was replaced by a science which, through its mastery of causal laws, gave to humanity the possibility of intervention in and eventual mastery over the nature of an unprecedented scale. This transformation took place at the same time as trade and exploration grew, and with it, the growing tendency to regard the world and humans in instrumental and exploitative ways seeing everything with a view to the personal, primarily commercial advantage that could be derived from it. The story of Robinson Crusoe, written towards the end of the initial phase of this transformation, reveals little of the influence of the new discoveries of natural science, but much of the new individualistic and exploitative outlook which increasingly drew strength from the economic transformation that it was helping to facilitate. Mastery of his environment and of others for his own benefit was Crusoe's imperative—how different from the attitude of feudal times, with its resignation to God's purpose in giving life and taking it away.

This outlook can hardly be said to diminish the rise of science to the level of 'mere ideology'—open to assessment only in the respects in which it facilitated the rise of capitalism. Yet, at the same time, it would be perverse to ignore the evident parallel between the view of nature that science engendered and the orientation towards the world as the provider of natural resources which is equally engendered by the perspectives of commerce and industry—or to suppose that this parallel is mere coincidence. It is in this sense that the organization of practical activity and the economic framework within which it is organized, has a crucial bearing upon the conceptual developments within a given society. It does so not as a causal or logical determinant but as that matrix of practical agreement which guarantees that communication within and between such developments will remain possible. 'Pure Science' cannot, any more

than art, religion, literature or philosophy, be portrayed as subordinated to economic and practical activities. But each does depend upon a certain form of division of labour in society from which arises the possibility that people may reasonably concern themselves with such things in the way they do. Moreover, the problems scientists seek to solve, the matters which artists depict, or the issues to which literature, religious and philosophical doctrines are directed, do not arise in a vacuum. For a form of life and a language must already exist, within which a person's preoccupations with such things must be intelligible to some degree. Otherwise they could not begin to engage in the relevant practice; no matter how innovative their eventual contribution might turn out to be. Of course, the same point applies to others who are able to understand conceptual changes and to see their relevance to the solution of problems which retain their practical identity throughout. If Einstein's innovations had been totally original then neither he nor his contemporaries could have understood or scientifically acted upon them.

So to conclude, that language acquires its purchase on reality through its involvement in practical activities and that the most important activities in this respect possess a measure of intelligibility in and of themselves. In translation, in the acquisition of language, in rational appraisal and where conceptual innovation occurs, we have proposed that disagreement in beliefs can only be distinguished in principle from misunderstanding of meaning if there is more to shared language use than mere coincidence of utterance with conditions of sensory stimulation. Concerted engagement upon the same tasks is the only token of the real agreement which ultimately makes linguistic communication and human progress possible. Our agreement in practical activities has the capacity to perform the constitutive role it does for our agreement in what we say because it is the ultimate bearer of the imputation of sense that the use of language requires. This is only revealed, however, because the same practical activities can be the bearer of divergent imputations. It is in this fashion that such activities practically mediate between conflicting conceptual schemes. They call for and constrain but do not determine the sense that is made of them. This, we would argue, is the relation that labour, via language, has to human consciousness and thus to any understanding of the natural and social world. Indeed, it is remarkable that it is precisely this same relation that Marx-without the benefit of the contemporary philosophy of language—anticipated in his early attacks on idealism.²⁶

²⁹ With Marx in mind and returning to the relevance of Heidegger to our concerns, M. Grene interestingly states: 'For Heidegger man is homo faber before he is homo sapiens: it is materials, tools, opportunities by which he finds himself surrounded.' See her Martin Heideger, London 1957, p. 22.

The American Connection: The Masculine Style in Popular Fiction

In recent years the growth of oral history projects in many countries testifies to the importance now given to popular experience, memory and activity recoverable through personal interviews.* Many of these projects have concentrated on experiences of working life, family life, women's work and political activity, the struggle against Fascism and the experience of war, trade-union and socialist politics, childhood recollections, and other kinds of direct, lived experience. Less attention has been paid to people's popular cultural experiences: the books they read, the films they saw, the music they listened to, the paintings and posters they remember, and the way in which these cultural—aesthetic experiences affected their lives. One's intuition has been that in earlier periods of working-class political activity, reading played an important part in widening people's understanding of the world, and poetry and fiction were often used as a form of moral confirmation that the world-view implied by socialist internationalism was one shared by many writers. In an earlier NLR essay I examined the work of some British working-class writers in

the 1930s who looked to aesthetic traditions—like expressionism—which were not to hand in British literary culture at the time. In this essay I want to look at the way, in much the same period, that many working-class people in Britain, particularly those active on the left, looked to writers in other countries for forms of literature which addressed themselves more directly to the emotional and political experiences which their class position had brought to bear upon their lives.

The initial impulse for this essay arose out of a conversation some years ago with an elderly working-class political activist which has stayed in my mind, although the exact circumstances of the discussion have been forgotten. I had asked him about popular reading amongst his friends when he was younger, and he answered in words to the effect that: 'Of course, you must realize, a lot of men were very keen on American paperbacks—detective stories particularly; you wouldn't get them reading novels out of the library'. More recently I have made a point of asking about early reading patterns and preferences when interviewing older labour movement activists, and have had this assertion confirmed: that the interest in American writing of various kinds was significant and had important implications for the development of a popular vernacular style of writing in Britain. For instance, in an interview with Jack Dash, the retired rank-and-file dockers' leader, the first writer whom he mentioned as an important influence was Theodore Dreiser, the founding author of American naturalism. A list of other American writers quickly followed-John Dos Passos, James Farrell, Upton Sinclair; and this register of preferences has been repeatedly invoked, with additions, by other working-class readers and writers whom I have interviewed.

If the broader 'American connection' is obvious, in this essay I want to concentrate on one particular genre within the body of twentieth-century American writing: the detective novel or 'thriller'. The study of this genre, it seems to me, most centrally raises the important question of a symbiotic link between genre writing and mainstream fiction in which, often, the genre writing is actually in the vanguard of exploring new narrative techniques, using vernacular styles of language democratically and unselfconsciously, and taking fiction into new geographical and social areas of life where the conventional novel is disinclined to venture. Moreover, against critics who wash their hands of popular literature, I would cite the understanding of Gramsci, who insisted that one had to engage with and find a way of 'framing the question of what is called popular literature, that is of the success, among the masses of the people, of the feallston (adventure stories, thrillers, crime fiction, etc.), a success which owes a good deal too to the cinema and the newspapers. And it is

^{*} Thanks to Philip Corrigan and Rebecca O'Rourke for their help.

¹ 'Expressionism and Working-Class Fiction', NLR 130 (November-December 1981)

² Thus this essay stands in total opposition to the 'socialist' criticism of popular literary genres adumbrated with admirable frankness by David Holbrook in his review of "The Popular Arts' by Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel in 1965 (*The Uns of English*, XVII, 3 Spring 1966). 'Raymond Chandler they choose as better than Mickey Spillane because he shows by his ironic asides that he knows what he is doing. I see no value in such "discriminations": if we are to have muck, let's have outright, sheer muck rather than muck that pretends, by anobbery or irony, to be superior ' (p. 195).

this question which constitutes the greater part of the problem of the new literature as the expression of intellectual and moral renewal: for it is only among the readers of popular fiction that we shall find a sufficient and necessary public to create the cultural base for a new literature.' And this is why the key role of American fiction in the development of British vernacular writing has to be understood, and why in particular it was within the genre of the American detective novel that certain writers were able to develop this popular form of literature into a sustained literary critique of urban capitalism, portraying human alienation in much more specific ways than conventional literature was at that point able to do.

The Detective Novel as Genre

The genre of the detective novel established itself from the First World War onwards as the most popular fictional form in European and American culture. Significantly, historians of the genre, such as Julian Symons, point to William Godwin's The Adventures of Caleb Williams or Things As They Are as the first novel to use a murder mystery as the central incident. As Godwin's sub-title indicates quite directly, the murder itself and its attendant ramifications were very much a device around which a political critique of prevailing economic and social relationships could be assembled. The false imprisonment of the main character is used by Godwin as the excuse for a lengthy and bitter attack on despotism, and reads even today as an admirable anarchist text. Caleb Williams was published just one year after the dangerously radical Inquiry into the Principles of Political Justice and might fairly, though not exclusively, be accounted for as expressing in fictional form some of Godwin's more direct political sentiments, as well as emotionally displacing genuine fears concerning his own personal safety, having sown the wind of political rights. The novel is also a story of arbitrary persecution and the adoption of a fugitive life, published in the decade which was to see the establishment of the first working-class political organization, the London Corresponding Society, and its rapid suppression.

Such radical origins were in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries partially displaced as the crime novel increasingly became a vehicle for the celebration of the property rights which wilful murder threatened to overturn or usurp. Thus in Godwin's novel the reader is made well aware that 'the law was better adapted for a weapon or tyranny in the hands of the rich, than for a shield to protect the humbler part of the community against their usurpations'. By the time of the era of the great gentlemen-detectives, however, the genre had become the perfect fictional form for the sacramentality of the executive institutions of the state. Audacious plots to steal the Crown Jewels, rob the Bank of England, poison cabinet ministers, counterfeit the legal tender of the realm, supplant false wills and thus break the ideological continuity of

³ From a selection of Gramsci's writings on popular literature circulated by Tony Davies at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.

⁴ See Julian Symona, Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel, Harmondsworth 1974.

inheritance and primogeniture, issue false share certificates in a deliberate attempt to bankrupt the major companies; all these insidious projects were foiled by the superior minds of gentlemen close to the heart of the Establishment (meeting usually in one of the better London Clubs), whose principal task was to ensure the continuity and extension of the English ruling class, at home or abroad.

Yet even these novels could not but reveal (as do all genre discourses) some of the major ideological moods and apprehensions of their times. Walter Benjamin in Ome Way Street thought that such novels in their descriptions of the omate settings of the country houses and apartments, rich with tapestries, crowded with heavy dark wooden furniture, exotic ornaments and potted plants, revealed in a way other novels did not, 'part of the bourgeois pandemonium'. Scarlo Ginzburg more recently has outlined a detailed analogy between principles of crime detection as exemplified by Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and the near contemporaneous principles of art detection as formulated by Giovanni Morelli and the observations of Freud in The Psychopathology of Everyday Life. All three 'detectives' were developing theories based on the belief that it was in the seemingly insignificant gestures and details of human behaviour that the real clues to the personality were to be found.

The more exotic of the British novels of the period after Sherlock Holmes have been scrutinized by Claud Cockburn in his study, Bestseller. 7 Apart from a general glorification of British imperialism, many of these novels contained a strong vein of anti-semitism, often linked with the menace of Bolshevism, together with a portrayal of the working class as an atavistic mob battering down the park railings. 'Consols are down to sixty-fivel' is the newspaper headline which marks the full moment of horror in Guy Thome's When It Was Dark (1903). Towards the end of Cockburn's period of study comes Warwick Deeping's immensely popular Sorrell and Son, a novel about middle-class failure partly compensated by the determination to hand something on and thus keep the continuity of inheritance intact: 'Sorrell found his poetry in figures. He was enjoying the romance of hard cash. These glittering sixpences, shillings, florins and half-crowns, they were the stars above his immediate world, and of far more significance and import than the stars. His means to an end, material plunder for immaterial needs. For with his savings he was going to arm his son against a world that babbled of socialism but still clutched a knife or a club . . . Only the indispensable and the individual few would be able to rise above the scramble of the industrial masses. It is the few who matter and who will always matter. So Sorrell thought.'8

In the 1920s and 1930s the crime novel dealt with many of the same fears as the earlier novels, but less exotically. The detective novel in this period was a form of fictional reassurance for a middle-class readership that the continuity of the class system was safe. Few detective novels in this period

⁸ Ibid.

⁵ One Way Street and Other Writings, New Left Books, London 1974, p. 49.

⁶ Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and the Scientific Method', History Workshop

Journal 9 (1980).

7 Part City To Part Control of the Control of the Scientific Method', History Workshop

⁷ Best Seller: The Beaks That Everyone Read 1900—1939, London 1972.

were based in urban settings, thus avoiding having to acknowledge the existence of an urban working class. Rather they were set, in the words of another critic of the genre, 'in a village, largely a commuters' village in the Home Counties where there's a church, a village inn, very handy for the odd Scotland Yard inspector and his man who come to stay for the regularly recurring crimes..... Such working-class people who appeared in these novels did so as quasi-feudal retainers: cooks, butlers, domestic servants, gardeners and sometimes a local policeman who could exemplify the important class precept of 'rural idiocy'. George Orwell, writing his 'Bookshop Memories' in November 1936, 10 thought that the divide in popular fiction between 'the average novel—the ordinary, good-bad, Galsworthy-and-water stuff which is the norm of the English novel' and the detective novel was exclusively along gender lines: women reading the former and men the latter. This contrasts with the opinions of other commentators who have often assumed the readership of the country house murder to be mostly women. Uncharacteristically, Orwell failed to mention class tastes in this short impressionistic account of the reading public based on his own bookshop experience.

What is demonstrably true of the popular fiction of the 1930s, whether in the genres of romance, detective novel or exotic fantasy (Blue Lagon or Bean Geste) is that working-class people were conspicuously absent amongst the characters. This was bound to cause considerable cultural tensions and pressures of non-recognition and marginality, even if these pressures were not articulated directly. Since it is clear to contemporary teachers of English in schools that working-class children always notice and register such massive facts of cultural invisibility in the fiction they read, there is no reason to suppose that working-class adults did not do so in earlier periods. Therefore it is not surprising that by the mid-1930s it was American writers who were beginning to find a wide readership in Britain, often amongst working-class men—2 shift which by the late 1940s had become a very significant cultural fact.

In The Uses of Lsteracy (1957) Richard Hoggart was keenly aware of this turn towards a genre developed in another country with quite different social and cultural histories. Unfortunately he regarded the genre as an undifferentiated cultural commodity, read, he thought, for its sexual content above all, and, in only mentioning by name such writers as James M. Cain and Mickey Spillane, he failed to raise some of the more important questions concerning the attraction of the American detective novel for British readers. He was right to see that the prose style itself was something new vernacular, terse, rather tough though in describing it as 'debased Hemingway' he failed to consider that Hemingway's style itself had developed in a continuous relationship with the 'tough-guy' school of thriller writing and could not be critically separated from it. Hoggart was also early to see the fact that because these novels were sited in the life of the 'megalopolis', they were attractive to the urban working class in Britain for whom the country-house murder was remote both in time and space.

Colin Watson, Crime Writers, BBC, London 1978, p. 61.

¹⁰ In Essays, Journalism and Letters, Vol. One, Harmondsworth 1970, p 275

It was immediately after the Second World War that American writing became firmly established in Britain. As John Sutherland noted: 'War stifled film-going and dining-out and had the paradoxical effect of stimulating reading while inhibiting the production of new books... People wanted fiction, and less was being produced. One consequence was the spectacular boom in American novels. Selling American rights was suddenly as easy as "falling off a log", an agent, Juliet O'Hea, recalled.' And it was in American fiction that many British working-class readers, including political militants, found a realism about city life, an acknowledgement of big business corruption, and an unpatronizing portrayal of working-class experience and speech which wasn't to be found in British popular fiction of the period, least of all in the crime novel obsessed as it was with the corpse in the library, the Colonel's shares on the stock market and thwarted passion on the Nile. Cultural mediation abhors a vacuum.

American Naturalism and the Vernacular Narrative

Of the many ways of understanding how literature 'reflects' the society in which it is produced, the study of genres is particularly useful in trying to understand the forms and meanings of popular literature. For the development of a genre is the development of a series of internal rules and understandings which make the structure of a cultural form at once familiar, recognizable and thus accessible. Developments in popular culture are necessarily developments within popular genres and forms. Russian formalist criticism in the writings of theorists like Shklovsky has argued that many important achievements in literature arise through 'the canonization of inferior (sub-literary) genres'; that Dostoyevsky's novels were in essence crime novels, Pushkin's lyrics a refinement of 'album verses', and so on. 12 However, to write self-evidently within the popular forms of genre fiction is certainly to risk losing critical acceptance and approval, although the rewards of cultural influence are potentially much higher. This is why it has become a commonplace to credit Hemingway with the development of a terse, unrhetorical, unsentimental style of writing which gave such a fillip to the development of American vernacular writing, even though it is certainly possible that Hemingway actually took his lessons from the early short-story writing of dime magazine writer Dashiell Hammett. This is certainly the opinion of Julian Symons: People say sometimes that perhaps Hammett was influenced by Ernest Hemingway but in fact any influence there may have been was the other way round because Hammett had started writing his stores in the early 1920's: the first one appeared in 1921 well before Hemingway had started writing."13

While French writers such as Camus and Sartre publicly admired the developments in technique which Hammett particularly brought to the novel in terms of its passionless, anonymous narrator and its milieu of cheap hotels, boarding houses, bars and cynical sexual alliances; orthodox literary opinion in Britain ignored the work of Hammett and other

¹¹ Fection and the Fiction Industry, London 1978, p. 3.

¹² See Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Laterature, Harmondsworth 1973, p. 235.

¹³ From the BBC programme notes for the series 'Crime Writers' (1978)

American detective novel writers as if it were beneath attention. It is salutary to remember Camus himself admitted that if it had not been for reading James M. Cain's The Postman Always Rings Twice he would not have had the idea and structure of psychological ambience with which to write L'Etranger, one of the most celebrated postwar European novels. 14 Other American writers in the detective genre were greatly admired in France. Horace McCoy, author of They Shoot Horses, Don't They? and No Pockets in a Shrond was described in the late 1930s described as 'the most discussed American writer in France', admired for the 'objective lyricism' of his narrative style. 15

British novelists, in contrast, have for the most part resisted the modernizing developments in narration and style developed in other countries and in genre writing, as if nothing had changed radically since Galsworthy. The insularity of much British fiction continues to be celebrated by its practitioners (although just in the last couple of years this seems finally to have been breached). Kingsley Amis's perorations sum up this attitude: I think that one of the reasons why, according to me, the English novel has got it over the American novel at the moment (sic) is because of things like English snobbery, and English conservatism and English class consciousness and all that kind of thing. Because I think that all this so-called wave of modernism has hit the English novel less hard than any other kind of novel. It seems to me that, little as I know of it, thank God, the French novel is in smithereens now, because of that wave.'16 Making allowances for Amis's consistent liking for parody, there is a widely-held understanding represented in these remarks. Even when socialist writers in Britain have chosen to write within the framework of genre fiction—for example G. D. H. and Margaret Cole jointly wrote detective novels, as did C. Day Lewis and Christopher Caudwell amongst others—they failed to use the genre as a medium for any accompanying radical developments in technique or ideas, but rather let the genre determine the form and content of their novels almost completely. It is no wonder that many working-class readers, particularly men, found American writing so much more accessible in style and subject matter in comparison to the classical formalism of the English novel of suburban manners—and murders.

The great popular early masterpiece of American naturalism was Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy, published in 1925. Dreiser himself had been brought up in bitter poverty in one of the mill-towns of Indiana and became a journalist on leaving school. That many important American writers started out as journalists—Dreiser, Hemingway, Chandler—shows a significantly different cultural and class route to writing than that of the majority of English writers of the same period who were likely to be public school graduates with some form of private income and connections with the major publishing houses. Dreiser's writing was immensely detailed in its descriptions of place and circumstance; H. L. Mencken wrote in an introduction to one edition of The American Tragedy that if a train time-table was given in a Dreiser novel

16 Sutherland, p. 22

¹⁴ See W. M. Frohock, The Nevel of Violence in America, New York 1950.

¹⁵ See Tanga-Gay Writers of the Thirties, D. Madden (ed.), New York 1968.

it was guaranteed to be right, and that every street scene in every novel had its exact original in some American town or city. Dreiser's sympathies were with the American common people, despite their faults, and he wrote about them unpatronisingly and with considerable insight. It is actually impossible to imagine a work of popular fiction published in Britain at this time (1925) in which working-class people could be portrayed realistically and sympathetically.

Dreiser's novel was based on a real murder case in 1906 in which a young man drowned his pregnant girl-friend and was executed for his crime. In Dreiser's version, the young man plans such a murder, but when the time comes to carry this out cannot go through with it. However, by accident the girl does drown and because of a mass of circumstantial evidence as to the young man's intentions he is tried for murder, found guilty and executed. This device was also adopted by James M. Cain in The Postman Always Rings Twics, wherein someone is condemned for the intention rather than the act. This was the irony much admired by Camus. Thus the plot could hardly be more simple; the power and interest lay in the way in which it described the lives and values of American urban life, the ambitions and corruptions, the dreams of success set against the miseries of the slums and the prisons.

By the time An American Tragedy was published, both Hammett and Hemingway had themselves published short stories. Hammett had his first work in print in 1921, and Hemingway's small collection of 'fragments', In Our Time, came out in 1923. All argument about who actually influenced whom must remain, unfortunately, speculation; however the connection between the two is not in doubt. Both had been trained in writing through their work: in Hemingway's case as a reporter and in Hammett's, as a Pinkerton detective. Hemingway acknowledged the influence of the style-sheets of the Kansas City Star with their instructions to 'avoid the use of adjectives, especially such extravagant ones as splendid, gorgeous, grand, magnificent'. ('The best rules I ever learned for the business of writing' recalled Hemingway.) There was also the discipline involved in transmitting stories by transatlantic cable which put an economic premium on each word. Hammett's early writing had consisted of case reports about his work at the detective agency which in later life Hammett recalled for their 'literary quality'. As has been noted, Julian Symons, in his history of the genre, thought Hammett to have been the initiating writer in the development of the austere vernacular narrative so much admired in Hemingway. Andre Malraux thought the same, commenting in 1937 that Hammett was the 'technical link' between Dreiser and Hemingway. 17 This question is so important because it is usually considered that Hemingway's austere, objective style can be attributed in part to the influence of Pound and Gertrude Stein in Paris, whereas it may well be that his style owed as much, if not more, to the developments achieved by Dashiell Hammett in his dime magazine stories: a rather less exotic parentage but one at least which acknowledges the modernizing pressure of popular, vernacular taste.

¹⁷ Richard Hayman, Shadow Man: The Life of Dathell Hammett, Junction Books, London 1981.

There were more direct material pressures which also helped to produce this condensed style of writing. Of the twenty-five stories Hammett had published between November 1922 and June 1924, half were less than 2,500 words. Hemingway's first collection. In Our Time, is simply a collection of short sketches, some less than one hundred words in length. Neither Hammett nor Hemingway began by regarding themselves as apprentice novelists, but rather as people who wanted to use writing as sharply and clearly as possible to describe an incident, recreate a conversation, portray violence and fear in a few short sentences. Both cultivated a prose style that had the appearance of objective reporting. As Hemingway said about his own writing: 'The test of a book is how much good stuff you can throw away. I use the oldest words in the English language when I write. People think I'm an ignoramus who doesn't know the ten-dollar words. I know the ten-dollar words. But there are older, better words....'18 Hammett narrated nearly all his short stones and early novels between 1923 and 1930 in the words of his anonymous private investigator working for the Continental Detective Agency, using the vocabulary of such a man rather than the vocabulary and syntax of an omniscient narrator. Chandler, when writing about the importance of Hammett in establishing the genre of the 'hardboiled' American detective novel, pointed out how Hammett's radical literary breakthrough arose out of his exactness of ear for popular speech: 'He had a literary style, but his audience didn't know it, because it was in a language not supposed to be capable of such refinements. They thought they were getting a good meaty melodrama written in the kind of lingo they imagined they spoke themselves. It was, in a sense, but it was much more. All language begins with speech, and the speech of common men at that, but when it develops to the point of becoming a literary medium it only looks like speech.' And with the extensive use of the vernacular, particularly in Hemingway's second collection, significantly titled Men Without Women (1927) came the now familiar 'Hemingway' narrative syntax built up with short, lapidary sentences.

The Emergence of a 'Masculine' Style

From the beginning this new development in narrative style was always described in terms associated with masculinity, in the critical reception of both writers. Of *The Malies Falcon*, one reviewer thought Hammett's writing 'better than Hemingway; since it conceals not softness but hardness'. Another reviewer of the same novel referred to 'the sheer force of Hammett's hard, brittle writing (which) lifts the books out of the general run of crime spasms and places it aloof and alone as a brave

¹⁸ A Hemigray Solicios, Dennis Pepper (ed.), London 1977, p. 195. This anthology, which includes early reviews of Hemingway's work along with most of his well-known short stones, is, significantly, an edition for schools, and reminds us of how important American writing—Hemingway, Steinbeck, Salinger, and so on—has been in the curriculum of British schools as a source of vivid narrative writing free of the class sentiment which distinguishes English writers of the same period. The accessibility and inventiveness of American writing continues to find a popular readership in Britism, where native writers conspicuously fail. In my own experience in teaching over the past fifteen years, the contemporary American writers who seem to be the most influential amongst young people in British are Ray Bradbury and Kurt Vonnegut, Junior.

¹⁹ Raymond Chandler Speaking, D. Gardiner and K. Sorley Walker (eds.), London 1962.

chronicle of a hard-boiled man, unscrupulous, conscienceless, unique.' The prose of Hemingway's first collection, In Our Time, is described as being made up of 'stubby verbal forms speeded in instances up to the brute, rapid, joyous jab of blunt period upon period. Hemingway's vocabulary is largely monosyllabic, and mechanical and concrete... Hemingway's style... in its very experimental stage shows the outline of a new, tough, severe and satisfying beauty related equally to the world of machines and the austerity of the red man.' The subsequent collection was reviewed by Cyril Connolly in the New Statesman thus: 'Men Without Women is a collection of grim little stories told in admirable colloquial dialogue with no point, no moral and no ornamentation. They are about bull-fighters, crooks, crook prize-fighters, crook peasants, dope fiends and soldiers in hospital. The title is intended to strike the note of ferocious virility which characterises the book, which is, however, by no means free from the strong silent sentimentality latent in this attitude.' 21

The understanding that there are 'masculine' and 'feminine' literary styles is not new, though it probably doesn't really surface as an explicit form of criticism until after the First World War and the break-up of traditional narrative forms under the impact of modernism. It has to be remembered that English Literature as a university subject itself was considered a 'feminine' subject until the appearance of 'scientific' (i.e. masculine) linguistic criticism, developed by I. A. Richards in the 1920s, and that historically the novel was the one cultural form in the nineteenth century particularly, in which women earned for themselves an equal, if not superior, status to that of men. Thus a noted 'authority' on style in this period, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, could point up some of the gender rules for writing: 'Generally use transitive verbs, that strike their objects and use them in the active voice, eschewing the stationary passive, with its little auxiliary is's and was's, and its participles getting in the light of your adjectives, which should be few. For, as a rough law, by his use of the straight verb and by economy of adjectives, you can tell a man's style, if it be masculine or neuter, writing or composition.²²

The narrative styles of Hemingway and Hammett are clear examples of this renunciation of all detail other than the action, the dialogue and a minimal description of the setting. No characters ever have their thoughts articulated; what we know about their inner lives has to be inferred from their speech and their behaviour. The omnipotent, all-seeing narrator of conventional narrative discourse has been dispensed with, and one can argue that the 'dime novel' arrived at this position several decades ahead of the 'nouveau roman'.

In between the first edition of one of the episodes from In Our Time and

²⁰ From A Hearingway Salection, p. 183

²¹ Ihad, p 184.

²² The Art of Writing, London 1916, p. 23. Yet in this period, aignificantly, Dorothy Richardson was, in the words of Virginia Woolf, developing something she consciously described as a 'women's sentence'. Gillian Hanscombe's recent study of Richardson (The Art of Life, London 1983) makes this question of a feminist style of writing a central theme and quotes Virginia Woolf's taxonomy of what such a syntix involves: 'a sentence of a more elastic fibre than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes' (p. 40). Syntiactic structures, then, are not merely questions of aesthetics but of class and gender as well.

the revised edition published eight years later, 'Hemingway reduced the 241 words to 121, the more than thirty descriptive adjectives to ten, shortened the length of the sentences, changed some of the adjectives to past participles, added several present participles, and made all the sentences simple and declarative'. Nothing remotely similar to this modernizing, democratizing process was happening at this time in the English narrative style. This is why when Chandler (who had been educated in England at Dulwich College) started to write, following in the style of Hammett, he stated that, Thad to learn American just like a foreign language... Thank heaven that when I tried to write fiction I had the sense to do it in a language that was not all steamed up with rhetoric'. 24

This concern with objectifying the language of the novel was one which accounted for the French enthusiasm for the 'hard-boiled' American detective novel, an appreciation of style which was part of a reciprocal admiration between French and American literature. It was, after all, one of the most famous maxims of Voltaire that 'the adjective is the enemy of the verb'. Flaubert's perfectionism was the standard by which a number of American writers at this time judged themselves. In Hemingway's Green Hills of Africa the narrator tells Kandinsky that one of the most important things for a writer to have is 'the discipline of Flaubert'. In writing to his publisher, Hamish Hamilton, in 1949, Chandler listed eight stones in European literature he most admired as 'all perfect': three were by Flaubert.

Both Hemingway and Chandler thought American English to be much more open to modern experience than the formalism of the language they found amongst the English upper class they met in London or in Paris. One of Hemingway's first published miniatures for In Our Time was a parody of an English officer's speech: 'It was a frightfully hot day. We'd jammed an absolutely perfect barricade across the bridge. It was simply priceless . . .' In a number of his novels, characters are often to be found commenting surcastically on formal English speech. In The Sun Also Rises, Jake Barnes remarks that When you are with the English, you got into the habit of using English expressions in your thinking. The English spoken language, the upper classes', anyway, must have fewer words than the Eskimo.' In Chandler's essay comparing the two styles of language, he thought American English, '... emotional and sensational rather than intellectual. It expresses things experienced rather than ideas . . . Why then can it produce great writing, or at any rate writing as great as this age is likely to produce? The answer is, all the best American writing has been done by men who are, or at some time were, cosmopolitans. They found here a certain freedom of expression, a certain richness of vocabulary, a certain wideness of interest . . . compared with it at its best, English has reached the Alexandrian stage of formalism and decay.'25

One or two radical critics in England at this time recognized the problem of the opaqueness and self-aggrandisement of English narrative style. In

²⁵ Ibid, p. 81.

Ernest Hemingway: Fine Decades of Criticism, L. W. Wagner (ed.), Ann Arbor 1974, p. 14.
 Frank MacShane, The Left of Raymond Chambler, London 1976, p. 48.

1931 the English poet and art critic (and philosophical anarchist) Herbert Read published his detailed analysis of English Pross Styls. In separating out the various structural and linguistic elements which combine to form what we call 'prose style', he pointed to a proper interest in narrative as being the most distinctive weakness of English writing: 'good narrative writing is comparatively rare in English literature. There is a human failing which urges us to elaborate and decorate our descriptions; it is perhaps merely the desire to infuse an objective activity with something of the personality of the narrator.'²⁶

Although there is a tradition of narrative simplicity in English fiction, a speed and economy in relating a story, such as is found in Defoe, Bunyan, and in the tradition of the picaresque novel, there is a rather stronger tradition which has been favoured in which the novel has become a rhetorical form, in which detailed description of place, custom and dress. together with an appropriate amount of moral reflection, tend to weigh down the progress of the narrative to a debilitating degree. The enormous effort—articulated most explicitly by Matthew Arnold—to make English literature a substitute for religion, the moral currency of the culture, may have given the novel a greater sense of its own importance, but this has often been achieved at the expense of its story-telling, vernacular, democratic obligations. As Read himself noted of the pre-novel literary forms: 'In the older forms of narrative, such as the Fable, the Allegory, and the Parable, the action is coherent and unimpeded.'27 The novel, though, in its development within English culture, has often almost tried to dispense with action altogether. This does go some way towards explaining that massive disjunction in this century between the novel of manners and the popular novel of action and narrative speed.

The Influence of Hammett and Hemingway

Between them, then, Hammett and Hemingway developed a tough, masculine, vernacular (or demotic) style of writing which helped transform and democratize American literature from the 1930s onwards, and which provided a vicarious excitement and a sense of freedom for a number of British readers, for whom the English short story and novel were still pre-occupied with provincial manners. Hammett and Hemingway evoked a harsh (but definitely twentieth-century) world of mining towns, transit camps, life on the road, seedy bars, boxing rings, corrupt city governments, and a proletarian politics that took guns and baseball bats to picket lines. At the centre of these stories were the stoical men who recorded everything they saw, who tried to retain some basic decency, tried to put things straight and restore a sense of order. Hemingway's Nick Adams; Hammett's anonymous agency detective who finally, in The Maltese Falcon, becomes the mythical Sam Spade. Such characters were quintessentially the 'degraded' heroes (Barthes) engaged in a 'demoniacal' (Lukacs) search for authentic values of the twentieth-century European novel, but they achieved a reading public far beyond that of the 'literary' novel.

²⁶ London 1931, p. 105.

²⁷ Ibid.

In Hammett's hands, especially, the detective novel became an important vehicle for radical social criticism, without reading like a polemical text. The assumption which informs all Hammett's work is that the police, politicians and big business combine together to run the city administration in their own interests, even though this often involves murder, gang-slayings, bribery and perjury. The scale of civic corruption in Red Harvest and The Glass Key is extraordinary, yet it is cleverly treated as a back-cloth, or night-town milieu, in which the detective works in response to other interests. The jungle of the cities which Brecht wanted to portray to European theatre audiences, Hammett had already fictionalized for his dime magazine readers. Brecht's 'City of Mahaognny' (1929) is directly related to Hammett's 'Poisonville' in The Red Harrest of the same year, sharing a common setting, imagery and dramatis personnes. Wim Wenders's film Hammett (1982) acknowledges that shared understanding in the expressionist garishness of his settings of Chinatown and the waterfront, quite deliberately non-naturalistic, and also in the way that by setting the film entirely at night, except for brief opening and closing sequences in daylight showing us the apartment block in which Hammett is writing, the film suggests that we are spending an evening in the theatre.

Yet as well as economic and political corruption, which are conventions of the 'hard-boiled' school of writing, there is also the convention of sexual corruption in which women belong to the forces of evil. For women always play an obstructive role in such fiction, threatening to emasculate or betray the stoical heroes on their lonely journies through the mean streets or on the adolescent camping expeditions, or during the final shoot-out which brings the typical detective novel to its end. Women do not figure as significant characters or strong characters in Hemingway's work: the early Nick Adams stories are about the painful decision to break off the relationship with Marjorie and choose a single life of action and self-discovery. In A Faravell to Arms, Hemingway's contribution to the great love novel, the woman dies on the last page leaving the man to walk off into the night, on his own, in the rain. In the detective novels of Hammett and Chandler this ending is developed into an established convention of the genre. In Hammett's Red Harvest the principal woman character and potential lover of the detective is murdered two-thirds of the way through the book; in The Dain's Curse the central female figure is saved from heroin addiction by the detective, but when she makes a sexual advance towards him is rejected; in The Maltese Falcon the same femme fatale is handed over to the police at the end, even though Sam Spade loves her; and in The Glass Key the detective does leave at the end with a woman to travel to another city, but it is an arrangement of convenience and made without any emotional commitment.

In Chandler's novels the misogyny becomes more extreme. One recent and convincing Chandler critic, Michael Mason, ²⁸ points to the increasingly obvious development in the novels of Marlowe's own homosexual sentiments, which are made more pronounced by the increasing dislike of women evident in the writing. The 'tough guy'

²⁸ In The World of Raywood Chandler, Mirlam Cross (ed.), London 1972.

novel is, in fact, predicated on a deep ambiguity about sexual identity. In a collection of 'Casual Notes on the Mystery Novel' (1949) Chandler seemed to be rationalizing a state of affairs with regard to his own detective creation, Marlowe, when he renounced the possibility of any kind of achieved and settled sexual relationship for the detective in the mystery novel: 'The only effective kind of love interest is that which creates a personal hazard for the detective—but which, at the same time, you instinctively feel to be a mere episode. A really good detective never gets married.'²⁹

Chandler's own writing, based as it was originally on a total admiration for the styles of Hammett and Hemingway, often specifically mentioned, became increasingly sophisticated and moved away from the popular and demotic. The descriptions of the settings became longer, although they were always characterized by a mordant and acerbic irony. The similes piled on top of each other, the dialogue became more consciously dry-witted and more often self-consciously studded with intellectual and literary allusions, the perorations on human weakness, civic corruption and sexual infidelity became longer. The cost of refining the genre was that it began to look towards a different readership for approval as it became more self-consciously literary and settled back again into conventional narrative forms. The one thing which Chandler continued to share with the earlier 'tough-guy' writers was a real hatred of police corruption and police brutality. In his last completed novel, The Long Goodbye, his portrait of the police is quite savage and bitter. The one honest police officer in the novel is described by Marlowe as talking 'like a Red'. I wouldn't know' the officer replies, I ain't been investigated yet'. This was written in the early period of McCarthyism. Elsewhere in the novel a character tells Marlowe, 'That's the difference between crime and business. For business you gotta have capital. Sometimes I think it's the only difference.'

It was for such insights that the 'tough-guy' novel came under rearguard attack from one of America's most distinguished establishment critics, Jacques Barzun, who defended the 'ethical, civilized, and in the best sense literary' qualities of the classic detective genre, against the 'pseudorealism' and 'nihilistic vandalism' of Hammett and Chandler, noting, with not a little dash of red-baiting, that 'the tough story was born in the Thirties and shows the Marxist colouring of its birth years'. Tondemned by the literary establishment in America for its sordid milieux and cynical (but dangerously radical) eye cast on the existence of massive civic corruption, it was also denounced by Communist aestheticians in the same period. Many derogatory references were made to the detective novel during the course of the Soviet Writers' Congress of 1934, of which Zhdanov's was most scathing: "The 'illustrious persons' of bourgeois literature—of that bourgeois literature which has sold its pen to capital—are now thieves, police sleuths, prostitutes, hooligans."

There is no sense here of understanding that to write about the

²⁹ Raywood Chardler Speaking, p. 70.

¹⁰ Jacques Barzun and W. H. Taylor, Catalague of Crime, New York 1971.

underworld, to portray life in the jungle of the cities, was in many ways to be writing about a milieu that most directly represented the ferocious struggles of capital and its political wings in Europe and America in the 1920s and 1930s. Professional literary criticism may not have realized this, but for a very large reading public the American thriller confirmed that big business and corrupt politicians combined between them to run the major cities of Europe and America, and could often count on a compliant police force to facilitate and consolidate the tyrannies of these wholly corrupt and ruthless alliances.

Chandler's influence on the British reading public was in one instance more direct than simply being a writer whose books were avidly read; as he often complained his work enjoyed a more enthusiastic reception in Britain than in America. A year before his death, whilst staying in London, he read an extract of an autobiographical novel by Frank Norman in Encounter magazine. Frank Norman was an orphan brought up in a Dr Barnardo's Home and sent to prison at an early age on a robbery charge. His prison memoirs, Bang to Rights, published in 1958, were an important contribution to the new wave of working-class realism which broke across British culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Having read the Encounter extract, Chandler offered to write a foreword: "There is no damned literary nonsense about his writing. Frank Norman writes swiftly and closely about things... An observation so sharp should not be lost to the world. We need it. He has it." 32

In the same year, Brendan Behan's Borstal Boy was published, as was Alan Sillitoe's Saturday Night and Sunday Morning. Neither Behan, Sillitoe, Bernard Kops, Bill Naughton and the other British vernacular writers who emerged in that period chose to write genre fiction; they wrote prison autobiographies, childhood autobiographies (to which Keith Waterhouse and Leslie Thomas contributed two fine books), or short stories and novels based on modern working-class picaresque heroes: Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton, Bill Naughton's Alfie. Yet the great narrative and stylistic caesura which separates their writing from that of popular socialist novelists of the pre-war period, writers such as Howard Fast and Frank Tilsley, for example, could not have been resolved in British writing without the direct influence of the American realist and vernacular tradition. For by the 1940s and 1950s, other American writers like Steinbeck and Salniger were being avidly read in Britain, and their crisp, popular colloquial style was widely admired and emulated.

In Britain the most radical attempt to use the detective genre as a way of writing about class and city life from a socialist/critical perspective has been William McIlvanney's *Laidlan* published in 1977. Laidlaw is a disillusioned detective in Glasgow working on a very unpleasant rape and murder of a young girl on her way home from a discotheque. As a portrait of working-class Glasgow, of the Protestant/Catholic divide, of the deep and self-destructive entrenchments of attitudes about gender roles, and of the Byzantine moral world of an urban police force, it is extraordinarily good. Although much better than anything Amis, Braine or Wain have written in the 1970s, their novels gather immediate status as

³² MacShane, p. 261.

serious contemporary fiction, whilst McIlvanney's is condemned to the second division of genre fiction, even though it won the 'Crime Writers' Association Silver Dagger Award' (sic).

What continues to be obvious, it seems, is that the 'tough-guy' vernacular style of writing, is very much the narrative style which many workingclass male writers adopt as the appropriate register and syntax for writing about contemporary class experience. The settings are often ones detached from routine daily life (including the workplace) and are often exclusively male: betting shops, pubs, cafes. Family life is not dealt with in great detail. From Sillitoe's quick-tongued, articulate, go-down-fighting, working-class rebels, via Bill Naughton's eponymous Alfie and Alan Bleasedale's Franny Scully, the narrative ideology is one of continuity with that developed through the connection with American vernacular realism. No one can doubt the strengths of this narrative style—its celebration of individual resistance to arbitrary authority, its quickwitted repartee in response to authoritarianism, the emphasis on the moral autonomy of the narrator or main character; yet there are disadvantages. The most obvious is the avoidance of engaging with the reality of personal and sexual relationships, or, when tackled, denying the mutuality and reciprocity of such relationships. The ideological roots of this persona combine a mixture of Protestant individualism with a dash of iron-in-the-soul existentialism. Its material basis is to be found in the relative autonomy which men possess within the culture of work and social relationships compared with women. The world in which the vernacular flourishes is that city life in which the semi-independent, entrepreneurial working class is to be found: in the street markets, amongst cab drivers, self-employed tradesmen, and of course amongst those involved in crime.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many women, including working-class women, feel estranged from popular vernacular writing, perhaps because it clearly emanates from a world from which they have been historically and culturally excluded. They feel, no doubt correctly, that it reflects a certain kind of working-class male bravura which, by definition, is oppressive. Yet, while accepting the weight of these criticisms, it is still important to defend, critically, vernacular realism because of its narrative strength and popular accessibility to the language of everyday life. Can a vernacular style of writing be developed which is not gender-specific and oppressive? (One still cannot imagine a woman writing, 'Down these mean streets a woman must go, a woman who is herself not mean . . .'.) The question is probably a decisive one. Economic and cultural oppression have historically reduced and limited the narrative styles (amongst many other cultural modes) by which that oppression can be resisted and overthrown. Despite the development of many new forms of cultural production since the thirties, the production of popular literature remains the site of very serious cultural struggles which need to be addressed more consciously than they have been so far by socialists.

The Writer's Resistance

Hanjo Kesting

The key to Peter Weiss's work lies in a short text entitled My Local Area. It is a place,' he writes, 'for which I was marked down and from which I escaped. . . . Its name was Germanicized to improve the understanding of those who lived and worked there.' The name of the place is Auschwitz. Without this very real vanishing-point of his life and imaginative spiritual autobiography, we can understand nothing of his writings.

Peter Weiss lived to be 65 years of age, but our image of him bears no trace of his old age. Other features predominate, such as his courage, intransigence and ever youthful thirst for knowledge. He was often ill, it is true, and had bouts of hypochondria. The notebooks from his later years make frequent reference to the afflictions and scandalous demands of old age. Although Peter Weiss was not spared this experience, he fought against resignation. When he was invited to appear as a writer, people would discover the sharply drawn contours of an ageless intellectual.

Perhaps this was based on an optical illusion, which would be dissipated once it was clear that Weiss had first appeared on the West German literary scene at the age of 45. Yet he was then immediately recognized as one of the outstanding authors of our time in Europe and the wider world. West Germany is probably the only country in the world where this is considered an exaggerated judgement. How are we to understand that in the hour of his death, the Akademie fur Sprache und Dichtung rushed to bestow the Büchner Prize on an author who already had been world-famous since 1964? Had there been no earlier opportunity? Had Weiss's fame reached New York and Tokyo but not Darmstadt? Were his political polemics and partisan declarations held against him to the end: his espousal of communism, his occasional dogmatism, his apparently relentless attitude to opponents, his obviously finite indulgence towards friends, his patient life in the thick of contradictions? Or was it, above all, his refusal to recant? What political suspicion on the part of an academy established in the name of Georg Buchner! At least this belated gesture of a troubled conscience gave some idea of the loss to German literature caused by Peter Weiss's death.

German literature—one falters at the word. Did Weiss really belong to German literature? He did gain his writer's identity through the German language, but only by dint of hard work in the linguistic no-man's land of exile. For more than forty years, Weiss lived in Stockholm as a Swedish citizen. He never found his 'way home'. What connected him to Germany was the language of his roots. Both little and a great deal. But no sense of social, political or even national belonging grew on those roots.

He made his literary debut in Germany with a prose text—or 'micro-novel', as he called it—which was published by Suhrkamp in a small series for booklovers. That was in 1960. For the previous twenty years or more he had mainly worked as a painter, searching for a visual expression of his experience of the world. He had started life as the bourgeois son of a well-off German-Jewish line of manufacturers. Art and literature were the quite uncommon escape of a young man dominated by fears and anxieties.

His next experience was one of disconnection from the illusory property-interest.

At eighteen, he emigrated via England to Czechoslovakia, and moved on to Switzerland and finally Sweden. Like the earlier stages of his thoroughly bourgeous biography, this was rather dimly experienced in a state of personal isolation, within the clutches of a family that seemed to accept the expulsion. This is the impression we get from his early paintings and from his first prose fiction, strangely titled *The Shadaw of the Driver's Body*. In this work Weiss attempted to free himself from the neurosis of his childhood and youth, using a classically modelled language whose scientific accuracy of description was then considered experimental and which was full of the intuitive discoveries of psychoanalysis and surrealism.

After the publication of his autobiographical Leavetaking (which Hermann Hesse called 'splendid and frightful') and his book Vanishing Point (another attempt at self-discovery and self-liberation), the hitherto unknown writer immediately broke into, in Wolfgang Koeppen's words,/the most exclusive literary salon'. But he did not feel at ease there for very long.

For now, when he was nearly fifty years old, Weiss finally encountered Marxist thought, doubtless recognizing it as the outside of his inner world and finding in it a grandiose self-ratification. In the act of writing, Peter Weiss constructed his theme of resistance as the distinctive wellspring of his work. The highest formulations were subsequently achieved in his theatrical pieces, in which he was able to unfold dialectically the inner tensions and oppositions of his earlier prose-work and to personify them in stage characters. He conquered the theatre almost at his first attempt.

Another startling title: The Persocution and Assassination of Joan-Paul Marat As Performed by the Immates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis & Sade. First performance in Berlin, April 1964. Soon a world-wide success and a great film. In Sade and Marat, radical individualism and revolutionary activism stand face to face with each other in a consistent, resolute articulation. It is a historical play, an explosive period-piece. But it is also an act of resistance. For the two great protagonists are represented by madmen at the level of a third protagonist: the theatre presented as madness. Insunity appears as contradiction and resistance against a violent world, in an artificial theatre of the insane.

Never again would Weiss's success be repeated: not with the epitaph on Auschwitz, The Investigation, which (impotently?) put up resistance to human forgetfulness; nor with the Discourse on Visionam, which used agitprop techniques to bring resistance up to date on the burning question of the time; nor with Holderlin, his play on the poet half-way between resistance and madness; nor with Treisky in Exile, in which the revolutionary thinks through the dialectic of revolution and ponders whether man or the Idea should stand higher. At that time, Weiss was also gripped by the old artist's dream of transcending the narrow limits of the aesthetic and exerting a directly political influence. And he dream it more fully than his fellow-artists, as an ideality of writing and action. Could he have succeeded? What is certain is that it could not have been lived in the theatrs. But Weiss did not renounce the dream.

This brings us to his novel with the remarkable title, The Assibetive of Resistance—a monumental product of nearly ten years of strenuous effort. This should be regarded as an attempt to overcome the opposition between writing and action, art and politics, and to fix that utopian point at which the great human projects of political liberation and cultural emancipation come together. It is the concrete utopia, realized as a novel-essay.

The book ends as follows: 'The point of my long wait, however, would be to explain the past on the basis of future insights. The important thing would be not

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new left review

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According to evidence cited by Mike Davis in this issue, low-income families in the United States lost \$23 billion in revenue and Federal benefits in President Reagan's first term while high-income families gained over \$35 billion. Such trends help to explain the massive endorsement of Reagan in the prosperous suburbs and sun-belt but they must themselves be explained in terms of the new pattern of US and global economy. In NLR 143 Davis explored the domestic configuration of the Reaganite social order with its burgeoning middle classes, service industries and armaments budget. In the present article Davis focuses on the strategic position of the hi-tech corporations and of the super-dollar within the new circuits of capital and trade. Symptomatic of the new dispensation is that Pacific exchanges are more dynamic than those of the Atlantic and that the cash flow of IBM has overtaken that of General Motors. No less significant is the fact that the Pacific rim and the hi-tech industries have proved most inhospitable to trade union rights. Davis's vivid account of the pathology of the US boom sheds much light on the tribulations of other capitalist states as well as on the re-election of Reagan. Socialist analysis of Thatcherism and of British capitalism has something of importance to learn from Davis's materialist understanding of Reaganism and US capital.

The US and British political systems are at once the oldest and most ~ conservative in the West with a strong bias against the representation of anti-capitalist forces. The continuity of ruling institutions, the first-pastthe-post electoral system, the salience of precedent and the ideology of pragmatism, all conspire to smother any radical challenge to the established order. Yet sometimes accumulated social and political tensions do threaten to disrupt the bi-partisan rituals and courtesies of political lifethe rise of Bennism in Britain in the early eighties and the support for Jackson in the Democratic primaries in the US last year are cases in point. If the Presidential run-off was strikingly lacking in political content or suspense the same could not be said of the contest for the Democratic nomination. To the surprise of all observers Jesse Jackson, an improbable radical, established himself as the recognised candidate of a largely Black-led coalition, drawing support from those ground down by poverty, violence and discrimination in Reagan's America. Manning Marable gives a detailed and fascinating account of the Jackson campaign

and of its meaning for the evolution of Black politics in North America. Jackson attacked the defence budget, US imperial ventures abroad and social injustice and inequality at home. In the course of the primaries he received 3.4 million votes and won the contests in 57 congressional districts. About a fifth of Jackson's support came from white voters attracted by the appeal of the 'Rainbow coalition'. Marable does not conceal Jackson's weaknesses in a socialist and anti-imperialist perspective but he does insist on the historic significance of a campaign which rallied opposition to Reaganite reaction and gave expression on the platform of national politics to a Black leader for the first time since the ending of slavery in North America one hundred and twenty years ago.

As official commemorations of the fortieth anniversary of the defeat of Hitler's Germany get under way, it is appropriate to re-examine the conditions which made possible the original Nazi assumption of power in a major capitalist state. Such reflection is assisted by the recent publication of two books devoted to the re-interpretation of modern German history: 'The Peculiarities of German History' by David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley (OUP) and 'The Collapse of the Weimar Republic' by David Abraham (Princeton). In a critical assessment of these works Richard Evans considers both the underlying structures of German history and the potential for authoritarian involution of bourgeois polities in the grip of crisis.

In NLR 144 Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas published a fine-grained historical critique of arguments advanced in a major work of socialist feminist theory, Michèle Barrett's 'Women's Oppression Today'. In this issue Jane Lewis replies that the evidence for a class logic in the formation of the household system is less clear-cut than Brenner and Ramas suppose, while welfare arrangements have been generally supportive of female subordination.

Also in this issue an interview with the American novelist Gore Vidal, in which he gives a characteristically mordant account of his education as a writer and social critic. Neil Belton's review of 'In Search of a Past' by Ronald Fraser discusses a pioneering attempt at self-discovery using the resources of oral history, psychoanalysis and literature. Finally, David McLellan reviews Norman Geras's widely praised essay on 'Marx and — Human Nature'.

Jackson and the Rise of the Rainbow Coalition

The 1984 presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson represented a new stage of development in Afro-Americans' struggle for equality in the context of us bourgeois democracy. Even white American political analysts unsympathetic with the Jackson campaign recognized this, and groped for words to define Jackson's achievement. After Jackson received 26 per cent of the New York Democratic primary vote, Theodore White suggested that the Black candidate had emerged 'as a major historical figure . . . a trail-blazer of the dimensions of (Martin Luther King). There is no doubt that henceforth there will always be a black candidate as an independent force in national Democratic politics, and American politics will never be the same.' The essence of the Jackson campaign was a democratic, anti-racist social movement, initiated and led by Afro-Americans, which had assumed an electoral mode. Its direct historical antecedents—the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955—56, the formation of sncc and the sit-in movement of 1960, the Birmingham desegregation campaign of 1963, and the Selma, Alabama march of 1965—were revived in

a new protest form within bourgeois-democratic politics. The roots of this electoral political mobilization were developed in the ambiguous terrain of national Democratic Party politics, with the collapse of legal Jim Crow and the numerical expansion of Black elected officials in the 1960s and 1970s. The unprecedented Black revolt against the Democratic Party within the primaries showed that the Afro-American social fraction, including much of the Black petty bourgeoisie, represents the vanguard of a nascent left alternative in the political culture of capitalist America: but simultaneously, the assertion of Black electoral power led to an increase in ethnic confrontations, and the 'melting pot' myth was shattered in the bitter and escalating conflict between the American Black and Jewish communities.

Blacks in Postwar Politics

Until three decades ago, Blacks played no substantial role in us presidential politics. In 1952, about 60 per cent of all Afro-Americans had never voted for president, and more than three-fourths of all Southern Blacks had never participated in a presidential election. Various segregation laws, such as whites-only Democratic primaries, poll taxes and literacy tests effectively disenfranchised the bulk of the Afro-American electorate, Nevertheless, the political affiliation of Blacks swung sharply from the Republican to the Democratic party during the Roosevelt administration, and partisan socialization increased with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. By 1956 about 70 per cent of all Blacks who identified politically with one of the two major bourgeois parties were Democrats. From 1964 and thereafter, this proportion of Black Democratic identification never fell below 90 per cent. In 1968, for example, the figure was 98 per cent.2 Throughout this period of political transition, Afro-American voters became an increasingly important electoral bloc in presidential races. As early as 1944, solid Black support for Roosevelt in at least eight states, including Michigan and Maryland, permitted the Democratic incumbent to overcome small white majorities for Republican Thomas Dewey in these states. In three presidential elections since World War Two, the Black vote has been the critical 'balance of power'.3 In 1948, Black voters gave Missouri Democrat Harry S. Truman his upset victory over Dewey. As political scientist Hanes Walton notes: 'Truman could not have won without it. He received it because of his civil rights speech at the beginning of the campaign: he never mentioned the issue again until the end of his campaign in Harlem.'4 In the presidential election of 1960, Republican Vice-President Richard Nixon was heavily favoured over John F. Kennedy. As Piven and Cloward observe, 'Kennedy made a vigorous appeal to the Black vote in the industrial states by campaigning on strong pledges to deal with civil rights and poverty . . And, although Black scepticism toward the Democratic Party persisted,' the Massachusetts Democrat received between 69 and 77 per cent of the national

¹ Theodore H. White, 'Jackson, Democratic Revolutionary', New York Times, 5 April 1984

² Gerald B. Finch, 'Physical Change and Partisan Change. The Emergence of a New American Electorate, 1932-1972', in Louis Maisel and Paul M. Sacka, eds., The Fisture of Political Parties, Vol. 1, Beverly Hills 1975, pp. 47, 50

³ Henry Lee Moon, Balance of Pawer The Negro Vate, Garden City, New York 1948, pp 35-36

⁴ Walton, Black Pelitics, p. 164

Black vote.⁵ In seven states, including Pennsylvania, Texas, Michigan and Illinois, the Afro-American vote was larger than Kennedy's overall margin of victory. Sixteen years later, an obscure one-term Georgia Democratic governor, Jimmy Carter, became the first president from the Deep South to be elected since 1848. In more than thirteen states, including Texas, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, and Mississippi, the Black electorate provided the margin of victory. Ninety to ninety-three per cent of all Black voters had supported Carter, giving some political observers the faulty impression that Blacks were now 'full partners in the nation's policy-making franchise'.⁶

Effective bloc voting for white capitalist candidates certainly shaped the results of these presidential elections, but it did not represent any meaningful increase in Black political power. Once elected, Truman issued an executive order banning racial segregation in the armed forces, and initiated fair employment procedures for federal agencies, but he did not break the power of the segregationist South in Congress, nor did he support blacks' voting rights. During Kennedy's first two years in office, he 'issued a mild executive order banning discrimination in federally-financed housing', but did nothing directly to assist the civil rights social movement.7 Carter proved to be the greatest disappointment for Blacks. His administration ended the creation of new programmes in human services areas; increased defence spending to alltime highs; and vowed to 'cut inflation and to stimulate the business sector' at the price of higher unemployment. By late summer 1977, Black Congressman Parren Mitchell, NAACP leader Benjamin Hooks, Urban League director Vernon Jordan, and Jesse Jackson, all of whom had campaigned aggressively for Carter, charged the administration with 'callous neglect'. Richard Hatcher, the Black mayor of Gary, Indiana, admitted: 'Now it's difficult for any Black leader who pushed the election of Jimmy Carter to face the people he campaigned with.'8 Blacks had acquired the political leverage to alter national elections whenever the white electorate was closely divided, but Democratic presidents usually ignored the policies of Black elected officials and civil rights leaders who had helped to put them into office.

The inability of Black petty-bourgeois leaders to force some level of accountability from white Democratic presidents to Black voters' interests created the political space for various Black third-party presidential challenges. In 1960, for example, the Reverend Clennon King and Reginald Carter announced their candidacies for president and vice-president representing the newly-formed Afro-American Party, which quickly died for lack of Black support. Usually Black presidential candidates ran on socialist or left-liberal party tickets which rested on multinational coalitions. In 1964, Black activist Clifton DeBerry ran for president on the Socialist Workers Party ticket. But confronted with

Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Regulating the Poor The Functions of Public Wolfare, New York 1971, p. 255.

⁶ Manning Marsble, From the Grainvestr Social and Political Etiegs Toward Afro-American Liberatum, Boston 1980, p. 28

⁷ Walton, Black Palitier, p. 117.

⁸ Marable, From the Greatrests, p. 30.

Walton, Black Paletacs, p. 126

the possibility of right-wing demagogue Barry Goldwater as the Republican candidate, virtually all of the American left, including the Communist Party, the Students for a Democratic Society, and the Social Democrats, united behind Democrat Lyndon Johnson. The Black vote for Johnson in most states exceeded 99 per cent. 10 In 1968 several Black national candidates emerged. Charlene Mitchell became the first Afro-American woman to run for president, as the nominee of the Communist Party. The Socialist Workers Party selected Newark, New Jersey organizer Paul Boutelle as its vice-presidential candidate. Eldridge Cleaver, author of the rambling polemic, Soul on Ica, and Minister of Information of the Black Panther Party, ran as the candidate of the anti-racist Peace and Freedom Party-whose primary base was the radical, white petty bourgeoisie and student movement in California. Cleaver was able to get on the ballot in over 19 states, and won nearly 200,000 votes. More quixotic was the campaign of cultural critic Dick Gregory, who had lost the Peace and Freedom Party's nomination to Cleaver. In his campaign, Gregory distributed 'money-size bills bearing his picture and a dove instead of George Washington and an eagle'. Although these handbills were seized when several found their way into automatic money changers', Gregory's combination of wit and panache garnered almost 150,000 votes. 11 However, the vast majority of the Black social fraction had little or nothing to do with these leftwing or protest mobilizations against the two-party system. Even in 1972, at the height of Black nationalist dominance of Afro-American political culture, only 35 per cent of Black voters supported the idea of an all-Black third party; and this figure declined by the end of the decade.¹² In that year, Julian Bond spoke for most Black activists in rejecting the viability of an independent electoral strategy. It is not going to be possible for 11 per cent of the population, disorganized and scattered, to form a third party,' Bond observed. At best, Blacks could 'hold aloof' from a Democratic presidential nominee in order 'to extract important promises . . . Or to run our own candidate, a Black candidate, for President in states where such a candidacy could affect the outcome.'13

The dilemma confronting Blacks and the left was quite simple. As Michael Parenti argues, 'the two major parties cooperate in various strategems to maintain their monopoly over electoral politics and discourage the growth of radically oriented third parties.' The Democrats, with an electoral base largely comprising workers and national minorities, but dominated by a fraction of the capitalist class, may advance social programmes more advantageous to the oppressed than those of the Republicans. But neither party 'has much appetite for the risks of social changes; each helps to make the world safe for the other.' 14 If the centre of American political culture was to be moved toward the left, activists would have to intervene within the Democratic

¹⁰ Duncan Williams, ed., The Lasser Evil. The Left Debatis the Dessecratic Party and Social Change, New York 1977, p. 46.

¹¹ Walton, Black Palatac, pp. 126–129, 136–139. Also see Hanes Walton, Jr., 'Blacks and the 1968 Third Parties', Negro Educational Review, Vol. 21, April 1970, pp. 19–23

¹² Finch, 'Physical Change and Partisin Change', pp 54-55

¹³ Julian Bond, A Time to Speak, A Time to Act. The Movement in Politics, New York 1972, p. 140.

¹⁴ Parenti, Democracy for the Faw, pp 200-201.

Party, and create the institutional presence necessary for translating their visionary agendas into actually existing public policies. The absence of even a social-democratic party in the usa led more radicals to view work within the Democratic Party as a question of tactics, instead of rejecting it on principle as in the classical Trotskyist conception. The Communist Party's 1936 presidential campaign—as indeed its 1984 campaign—was largely a Popular Front-inspired effort to defeat the Republican rightist candidate and to elect the more liberal Democrat. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, Blacks and the us left attempted, with varying degrees of success, to use the Democratic Party as a vehicle for progressive politics. In 1964, the Freedom Democratic Party, led by Fannie Lou Hamer and Lawrence Guyot, challenged the white racist machine in Mississippi. 15 In 1965, a group of white socialists in New York City created the Committee for Independent Political Action, which attempted to advance an anti-Vietnam war agenda within the Democratic Party primary elections. Radical trade unionist Stanley Aronowitz viewed the strategy as a means for 'an independent political movement' to attack the Democratic Party, as well as to 'evolve into a third party.' Revolutionanes who entered the Democratic Party could 'put reform Democrats who are radicals programmatically on the spot', while educating a mass audience. 16 In 1972-73 the Black Panther Party made an abrupt turn to electoral politics, and registered 30,000 new voters from working-class and poor Black neighbourhoods in the Democratic Party. Panther leaders Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown ran for mayor and city council, respectively, of Oakland, California on a platform emphasizing 'the need to open the government up for public scrutiny, community control of the police . . . rent control and adequate public services.' Seale astonished the Democratic Party establishment by finishing second in a field of six candidates. The Black voter turnout was a strong 63 per cent. The Panthers' success, according to political theorist Rod Bush, 'was decisive in breaking the dominance of the conservative white machine over Oakland politics.' Four years later, the Panthers were instrumental in electing Black liberal judge Lionel Wilson as Oakland's mayor. 17 The Democratic Party primaries and local apparatus could be used by progressives to push for liberal-left reforms. But at a national level in presidential politics, Bond argued, Blacks would have to unite with progressive whites 'in a political coalition' to address not simply civil rights issues, but women's rights, 'consumerism', us foreign policy, and the environment.18

A Black Candidate for '84?

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With the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, the context emerged in which Black, Latino, and liberal-left white social forces began to

¹⁵ On the early development of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, see Lawrence Guyot and Michael Thelwell, "Toward Independent Political Power', Freedom pt, Vol. 6, Spring 1966, pp 120–132, Jack Minnis, "The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party', Freedom pt, Vol. 5, Spring 1965, pp 264–278, and Lealie B. McLemore, "The Freedom Democratic Party and the Changing Political Status of the Negro in Mississippi', master's them, Atlanta University, 1975

Williams, ed , The Letter Entl, pp 73, 75

¹⁷ Rod Bush, ed., The New Black Vata. Polistics and Power in Four American Cities, San Francisco. 1984, pp. 42–45.

¹⁸ Bond, A Time to Speak, A Time to Act, p. 162

coalesce. Reaganism represented a reaction against virtually every institutional achievement of national minority groups, women, and workers since the New Deal. In the area of civil rights, Reagan 'openly trumpeted the demands of the extreme right wing and the powerful corporate interests that affirmative action be eliminated.' The administration fought unsuccessfully to eliminate the extension of the Voting Rights Act. 19 Liberals were purged from the us Civil Rights Commission and other federal agencies created to protect national minority and women's rights. Economically, Afro-Americans experienced staggeringly high rates of unemployment. Throughout 1982-83, official Black unemployment rates were between 19.5 and 21 per cent—and even above 30 per cent if one counts in 'disregarded' workers who had not applied for jobs within one month, and those workers involuntarily employed in part-time jobs. Black youth unemployment was above 80 per cent in most urban areas of the North and Midwest. Reagan's response was to introduce a 'sub-minimum wage bill' for young workers, which would undercut jobs already held by union members and national minorities.²⁰ The general climate of high unemployment and right-wing political rhetoric fed a resurgence of vulgar racism within the national political culture. Speaking before the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice, Fauntroy declared that under Reagan 'the American public has developed a scapegoat mentality that reflects itself in anti-Black feelings, directed at Blacks at all levels of life.'21 And from the gutters of public life the Ku Klux Klan once again began to flourish under the benevolent aegis of Reaganism. The KKK initiated white-voter registration drives in Alabama and Georgia; ran openly for federal and state offices throughout the South; and revived its tradition of bombings, shotgun murders, and cross burnings. The Klan recognized that it represented the activist, vigilante wing of Reagan's conservative social forces. It praised the new reactionary Civil Rights Commission as 'the first positive move to free America of communism, affirmative action, rampant giveaway programmes, [and] forced busing.' In early 1984 Bill Wilkinson, leader of the Invisible Empire faction of the KKK, endorsed Reagan for re-election, declaring 'anytime you see all the Blacks and minorities in this country opposing, strongly, one man, you know he has got to be doing something good for the white race."22

Throughout much of 1983, with the mayoral campaign in Chicago of Harold Washington, a Black Democrat, and the national mobilization for the third March on Washington, DC, the left and the Afro-American social fraction debated the various electoral political options to attack Reaganism. Inspired by the recent successes of the Green parties in Western Europe, the California Peace and Freedom Party initiated a

¹⁹ Arthur Kinoy, 'The Struggle to Retuin Affirmative Action', Flight the Right, No. 2, June 1984, p. 20. ²⁰ 'One out of Five Blacks Jobless', Louisians Weekly (New Orleans), 9 April 1983, Julian Bond, 'Cheap Jobs, Cheap Wages', The Shamer (Portland, Oregon), 16 March 1983, Seth S. King, 'U.s. Jobless Rate Declines to 9 8 Percent', New York Times, 9 July 1983.

²¹ 'Unemployment, Inflation Has Scapegost Showing Anti-Black Feelings', Charleston Chronick, 9 July 1983.

²² 'Klan Holds White Voter Registration Drives, Backs Candidates', *Klametel Intelligence Report*, July 1984, p. 4, 'Klansman Praises New Civil Rights Commission', and 'Reagan Slow to Disavow KKK Backing', *National Anti-Klan Network Naviletter*, Winter-Spring 1984, p. 8

dialogue with the Citizens Party, Communist Party, Socialist Party, Workers World Party, and several smaller Leninist formations to create a united left campaign which could 'pose an alternative to the Democrats and Republicans'. From the initial June 1983 discussions in Oakland, California, strategic differences divided the left. The Communist Party, which was heavily involved in both the Chicago campaign and the March on Washington, argued that working with Democratic liberals was a 'tactical question—not a matter of absolute principle'. It doubted the 'viability of a socialist campaign without a conscious working class'. The Citizens Party, internally divided, and the marginal Socialist Party. were already prone toward running their own symbolic national campaigns, and both viewed any intervention into the Democratic Party primaries with repugnance.23 Most Black independent leftists recognized that a united left national campaign, even with an Afro-American presidential candidate, would attract virtually no support from the Black working class; and in principle, they endorsed a Black challenge within the 1984 Democratic primaries. But they emphasized that the central aim of such an effort would be to advance a comprehensive liberal-left agenda on domestic and international affairs. The individual candidate, as Boston radical Mel King asserted, was secondary to 'the articulation of the issues'.24

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The Black petty bourgeoisie was deeply divided, with the vast majority of leaders strongly opposed to any kind of Black challenge within the Democratic primaries. Urban League leader John Jacob denigrated the notion as 'a retreat to symbolism' which would 'fragment the Black community' and 'shatter Black expectations'.25 The NAACP was firmly opposed as well. Joseph Madison, the Association's director of voter education, predicted that the 'maximum number of delegate votes that a Black candidate could depend on would [be] 250. Anyone with any deal of sense knows that the chance of a Black being elected . . . is extremely remote. 26 Benjamin Hooks curtly dismissed a Black candidacy, exhibiting his confusion betwen a factical, educational mobilization and a traditional capitalist campaign to win a party's nomination. 'Afro-Americans are too sophisticated to need a Black presidential candidate to stimulate their going to the polls . . . I don't think we're that dumb.' Hooks maintained that 'a Black person [hasn't] a ghost of a chance of winning in 1984', but added somewhat coquettishly that he was 'gearing up [his] mechanism to think about running in 1988.'27 SCLC president Joseph E. Lowery offered qualified support for the move. 'The combined efforts of high unemployment, federal policies that constitute a vicious assault on rights so dearly won, and embarrassing capitulation by Democratic opposition, have created a crisis of frightening dimensions for Afro-Americans,' Lowery warned in May 1983. A Black presidential candidate was a 'radical' yet 'viable option', which could, under the appropriate set of conditions, advance 'systemic

²⁵ Tod Ensign and Joyce Stroller, 'Will Left Parties Run in Tandem in '84' Gaardian, 13 July 1983 ²⁶ Akinshiju C. Ola, 'Will a Black Go for the White House in '84' Gaardian, 13 July 1983

²⁵ Celes Tisdale, 'Yes, There Should Be A Black Presidential Candidate in '\$4', Bafale Challenger, 25 May 1985

^{**} Sheila Rule, 'MAACP to Focus on Black Voter Drive in North', New York Times, 14 July 1983

changes' and attack 'structural unemployment'.28 Ironically, one of the more conservative civil rights leaders, M. Carl Holman, president of the National Urban Coalition, strongly endorsed a Black presidential campaign. 'No white candidate [could express] the ache and anger of Black communities ravaged by joblessness,' Holman commented. Many Black politicians still had 'serious reservations', but most 'professional, religious and working-class Black people are saying that the country should start getting used to the idea that a Black may be as genuine a Presidential candidate as anyone else, without having to enlist in some splinter party . . . No amount of riducule [or] fear [can] eliminate the possibility of such a candidacy as early as 1984.'29

A similar division existed among Black elected officials and labour union leaders. Most Black mayors shared Hooks's misgivings. The most influential Black mayor in the country, Coleman Young of Detroit, repeatedly declared that 'the major task of Black America today is to get rid of Ronald Reagan. We cannot afford to support a Black candidate who cannot win.' Andrew Young, recently elected mayor of Atlanta, believed that Blacks ought to be in any campaign where the candidate is likely to be elected president.' Harold Washington agreed. 'We do not have the luxury to unite behind a Black candidate who can't win and re-elect Ronald Reagan. '30 Some Black mayors began to make secret agreements to work for the campaign of former Vice-President, Walter Mondale. Birmingham mayor Richard Arrington became an 'adviser' to the presidential campaign of South Carolina Senator Ernest Hollings in early 1983, only to switch to Mondale as Hollings declined in public opinion polls.³¹ Most members of the Congressional Black Caucus were decidedly cool to the prospect of a Black candidate. Influential Congressman Charles Rangel of Harlem agreed to serve as national vice-chairman of Mondale's campaign. Congressman Walter Fauntroy feared that a Black candidate might increase right-wing white registrations and lead to the defeat of a number of Black Congressional candidates. Only three Black Representatives, John Convers of Detroit, Gus Savage of Chicago, and Ronald Dellums of Oakland-Berkeley, actively pushed the strategy throughout 1983. For Convers, the Black candidacy was a response to the multiple failures of federal policy under both Democratic and Republican administrations, the steady progression in Black and minority politics, and the need to build a new coalition. It is the logical application of the experience gleaned in twenty years of struggle."32 Most Black petty-bourgeois leaders remained unconvinced. Clarence Mitchell, president of the 357-member National Black Caucus of State Elected Officials, told the press in September 1983 that a Black candidacy could be divisive and hurt local efforts to

[&]quot; Joseph E. Lowery, "The 1983 Election Agenda", Carolina Passenatar, 21 May 1983

M Carl Holman, 'A Black for '\$4', New York Times, 22 April 1983, James H Cleaver, 'Coalmon Backs Black For President', Charlester Chromols, 16 July 1983, and Holman, 'Black Presidential Candidate in '\$4?' Australam News (New York), 9 April 1983.

²⁰ Black Mayors Duagree On Black Presidential Candidate, Agree Reagan Must Go', Westnik Garetta (Florida), 1 September 1985.

³¹ Ann Woolner, 'Burmingham's Mayor Likely to Back Hollings', Atlanta Journal, 25 March 1983

²² John Conyers, Jr., 'Why We Should Work for Jesse Jackson', The Organity, Vol. 10, Spring 1984, pp. 31-32; and Gus Savage, 'An Independent View from Capital Hill', Passenda View (Florida), 3-9 March 1983

gain more influence.' Coretta Scott King boosted Mondale's credentials as a civil rights proponent with her endorsement.³³ In a perverse argument, neo-conservative Black journalist Tony Brown belittled a Black candidacy within the Democratic Party, and urged Black Republicans 'to seize the moment and run a Black candidate' inside Republican primaries against Reagan.³⁴ Black labour spokesman Bayard Rustin predicted that any Black presidential race was simply 'doomed', because it would take votes away from white 'liberals' like Mondale, and it would 'heighten racial tensions'.³⁵

The 'Coalition of the Rejected'

In a series of meetings in Atlanta, Washington, DC and Chicago, Black leaders-including Andrew Young, Coretta Scott King, Newark mayor Kenneth Gibson, Lowery, Fountroy, Conyers, and Jesse Jackson privately debated the Black presidential option. At the Chicago meeting of June 20, about two-thirds of this group gave nominal 'approval to the concept', but did not endorse any particular candidate. 36 Part of the problem among Black middle-class leaders was an inaccurate assessment of the meaning of the Chicago election. Many Black leaders, especially Andrew Young and Congressman Alan Wheat of Kansas City, were fearful that 'if Washington had lost, there would have been an emotional reaction to run a Black presidential candidate as a matter of spite."37 White political analysts such as Tom Wicker also warned that a Washington defeat would prompt 'Blacks everywhere' to charge 'the loss to racism' and would 'lead to a Black presidential candidacy' in order to 'shake up' the party.38 When Washington won, most Black leaders and white liberals concluded that the pressure was now off. At the NAACP's national convention in July 1983, leaders confidently predicted in private that the Black candidacy movement would die out before October. Other Black leaders, both radicals and moderates, vehemently disagreed. Holman asserted that a Washington victory would 'encourage Black candidates to come forward for local, state and national office'.39 Convers argued that the 'important lesson' of Washington's mayoral race was that 'an office-seeker who has something to say about historical class concerns against inequity and injustice will catch on with voters even without having a multi-million-dollar war chest.'40 Mel King also stated that 'Chicago gives a model of what happens when there's some political organizing going on that confronts the status quo and gets people to register to vote—they can make a

³³ Ronald Smothers, 'Black Cancus Weighs Candidacy by Jesse Jackson', New York Tuess, 26 September 1983, and 'Should There Be A Black Presidential Candidate in 1984", Buffale Chellinger, 18 May 1983

²⁴ Tony Brown, 'Can Black Republicans Pull Off Presidential Race?' Carolina Pascomahor, 14 May 1081

²⁵ Bayard Rustin, 'Black Presidential Candidate Doomed', Let Angeles Sections, 2 June 1983

^{* &#}x27;Support Growing for Jackson Presidential Bid', Statement (Florida), 12 May 1983, and Howell Raines, 'Group of Black Leaders Supports Idea of Bid by Black for Presidency', New York Times, 21 June 1983

^{37 &#}x27;Chicago's Effect', Charleston Chronich, 30 April 1983.

^{*} Tom Wicker, Blacks and Chicago', New York Times, 12 April 1983.

> Holman, 'A Black for '84'.

[&]quot;Democrats Don't Want a Black Candidate', Baffalo Challenger, 27 July 1983

difference in the electoral process.'41 And for Jesse Jackson, 'Washington's coalition victory' gave the 'Black presidential candidacy a major boost . . . It demonstrated that while some will join us if we assert ourselves, without such aggressiveness no one else will lead our fight for equitable representation, and some will actively oppose our interests despite past service and loyalty to the party.'42

Once again, the actual social momentum for power among Black workers and the poor swamped the complacent composure of the bulk of the Afro-American petty bourgeoisie. Black nationalists who had long criticized electoral politics now rapidly gravitated toward the Black presidential campaign. Maulana Karenga, the leading Black nationalist figure, declared that 'running a Black candidate can produce a spirit of mobilization and organization formations which can be used after the campaign in other projects.' Given the 'political timidity of the Democratic party in the face of the Right', Afro-Americans had to assume 'their traditional role of raising the radical and progressive banner around which others also can rally'.43 Leading Black clergy generally favoured a Black presidential race. In June 1983 Bishop H. H. Brookins, a presiding bishop of the AMB church, denounced John Jacob and others for their capitulation to Mondale. When Mr Jacob says we should not field a Black candidate, to me, it is like saying the various organizations which have opposed a Black presidential bid are afraid of losing the traditional support from the white liberal groups that have given them money through the years . . . the Black church is standing behind the idea of a Black presidential candidate in the Democratic primaries.'44 However, the most active proponent of the strategy was Jesse Jackson. In hundreds of towns and urban centres, the 42-year-old civil rights leader resterated his message: Blacks have their backs against the wall and are increasingly distressed by the erosion of past gains and the rapidly deteriorating conditions within Black and poor communities. As Black leaders have attempted to remedy these problems through the Democratic Party—to which Black voters have been the most loyal and disciplined group—too often they have been ignored or treated with disrespect . . . A Black candidacy could use an 18 million eligible Black voter base to put together a "coalition of the rejected", including appealing to six million Hispanics, women, more than 500,000 Native Americans, 20 to 40 million poor whites, and an appeal to the moral decency and enlightened economic self-interest of millions of rejected white moderates, liberals and others . . . A Black candidacy would alter the essentially negative and defensive option of the "lesser of two . . . evils", to the positive and offensive alternative of a "live" option. An increase in voter registration and political participation would have a profound impact upon the status quo of the Democratic Party . . . Never again should Blacks live and operate below their political privilege and rights.'45

⁴⁴ Ola, Will a Black go for the White House in '84"

⁴ Allen, 'People's Victory John Reaganites'

⁴ Manlana Karenga, 'Running A Black Presidential Candidate Pros, Cons and Cavests', Buffalo Challenger, 7 September 1983.

⁴⁴ James H. Cleaver, 'Brookins Rebuts Black President Dissenters', Charleston Chronich, 18 June 1983

⁴⁵ Jesse L. Jackson, 'Advantages of a Black Presidential Candidacy', Wattook Garytin, 28 April 1983.

Jackson's extensive promotion of the strategy had the effect of focusing the national media on Jackson as the most likely Black Democratic challenger. In one national public opinion poll, held in May 1983, Jackson ranked third of all national contenders for the nomination. Jackson was the first choice of 42 per cent of Black Democratic voters, but of only 3 per cent of white Democrats. Only slightly more than half of all white respondents had even heard of Jackson—but 78 per cent of all Black voters gave him 'a favourable rating' as a leader. 46

Jackson, the Improbable Radical

The sudden emergence of Jackson as a potential progressive political candidate first came as something of a shock. Prior to his presidential campaign, he had exhibited few indications of an ideological or political commitment to advance the rights of Black workers and the poor. Born in South Carolina, Jackson first became one of King's chief lieutenants during the SCLC 1966 desegregation campaigns in Chicago. Placed in charge of the organization's 'Operation Breadbasket' programme, the young minister was also involved in coordinating an SCLC-sponsored tenants' union. His most significant victory came when two large grocery corporations 'agreed to carry products of Black corporations and to deposit in Black banks the income from their stores located in the ghetto.'47 Several years after King's assassination, Jackson angrily broke with scho, then led by King's closest associate, the Reverend Ralph David Abernathy. Unlike other SCLC leaders who left the organization to run successfully for Congress, such as Young and Fauntroy, Jackson seized the 'Operation Breadbasket' programme for his own political base, and operated as a maverick of sorts.

Throughout the 1970s, Jackson seemed alienated both from the Black nationalist or Black militant organizations, and from more moderate civil rights groups. Before an audience of 3,000 pan-Africanists and Black nationalists at the Congress of African Peoples held in Atlanta, Georgia in September 1970, Jackson advocated economic strategies which would promote Black Capitalism. You think being unemployed means you ain't part of the system? That just means you [are] in the unemployed part of itl' he declared. For those who 'believe in some creative form of democratic socialism [who] don't believe in the system', Jackson asserted that 'morally you are not of the system but economically you're in it.' For Jackson political independence meant that Afro-Americans had to shed their allegiance to the Democratic Party. 'Democrats, let somebody come through as our saviour in the form of a Republican. Let him come.' Tactically, this suggested that Blacks had to use their collective economic strength to make coalitions with any faction of the white establishment which provided the greatest benefits. 'We've always been judged based on profit and loss, asset and liability. And once you get your economic definitions, if in forty markets you

⁴⁴ James H. Cleaver, 'Jesse Jackson Could Seek U. Presidency', Charlistes Chronich, 12 March 1985, Fay S. Joyce', 'Alabama Legislature Hears Jackson', New York Times, 25 May 1983, 'Black Presidential Candidacy Endorsed', Minority News Review (Chicago), September 1983, p. 15; 'Jesse Jackson Says He May Run For President in 1984', Florade Stor, 12 March 1983

⁴⁷ Lewis, King, pp 339, 366

say we don't want Dixie crystal sugar, you can run Nixon into Castro.'48 The next year, Jackson dismayed many radical Blacks by sponsoring Black Expo' in Chicago, which in historian Vincent Harding's estimate, carried 'an obvious appeal to those structures of American private enterprise capitalism which we had recently and bitterly condemned.'49 In May 1980 Jackson flew to Miami, Florida, to help quell racial violence, only to meet outrage from local Black leaders. He was rejected by Miami's militant youth and moderates as an 'outsider', and one well-publicized Jackson media event in the Black ghetto's major community centre attracted only twelve people, six of whom were television reporters.⁵⁰

Black petty-bourgeois leaders, conversely, disliked Jackson's egocentred rhetoric and lack of organizational follow-through. His new formation, Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity), used federal funds to develop a series of public educational programmes of, at best, uneven value. Following his earlier economic boycott victories in Chicago, Jackson pressured large corporations to sign 'corporate covenants'. One of these, signed in April 1983 and worth an estimated \$450 million, pledged Burger King Corporation to hire more Black employees and managers, to upgrade existing restaurant facilities in Black neighbourhoods, and to place funds in Black-owned banks. Despite their wide publicity, however, push's covenants did little to reduce Black urban unemployment, and some of the corporate signatories repudiated them within a year, or failed to carry out the prescribed measures.⁵¹ At times, Jackson seemed to denounce the very necessity of a conscious civil rights movement, focusing purely on a neo-Booker T. Washington approach toward Black socio-economic advancement. PUSH's response to the loss of thousands of Black workers' jobs in the auto industry was the purchase of one-hundred shares of stock in Chrysler, Ford, American Motors, and General Motors. Jackson explained that this curious move would 'assure us the right and the platform to voice our concerns'. At the July 1982 convention of the National Business League in New Orleans, Jackson urged Blacks to move beyond 'Civil Rights to Silver Rights and from aid to trade. We want our share of opportunities for risks and rewards' within America's economic system. 'The way to achieve equality is to allow minorities to share in the trade with the whole community—to allow them to partake of the benefits.'52

Politically, Jackson constantly baffled and outraged Black elected officials, most of whom identified with the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. At the Democratic National Convention of 1980, Jackson and his close political ally Richard Hatcher lobbled against economic

⁴⁰ Speech by Jesse Jackson, in Imamu Amin Baraka, ed., African Congress: A Documentary of the First Medica Pow-African Congress, New York 1972, pp. 22-34.

^{*} Vincent Harding, The Other Assertion Revolution, Los Angeles 1980, p. 214

³⁰ Marable, Blackweter, pp. 130, 133

²¹ Manning Marable, 'The Paradox of Reform Black Politics and the Democratic Party', Southern Expanses, Vol. 12, February 1984, p. 22

²² 'FUEH, Burger King Announce "Trade Pact" ', North Show Eccarmer (Illinois), 6 May 1983, and Rufus Ladipo, 'Why The Southern Crusade⁵ Rev. Jesse Jackson's Political Image Communics to Boom on the National Scene', Missertly News Review, July 1983, p. 8

platform planks that called for increased federal spending for jobs, and supported Carter's renomination over the more liberal candidate, Senator Ted Kennedy. During the general election Jackson suddenly flirted with the Reagan campaign, telling the press that 'the Black community has the responsibility and obligation to listen to what both parties and all candidates have to say,'53 Thus, when Jackson's name first surfaced in early January 1983 as a possible candidate, most Black intellectuals, radical nationalists, community organizers and elected officials did not relish the idea at all. Even during Harold Washington's mayoral race. Jackson was literally kept 'at arm's length', journalist Monroe Anderson observed. When Washington announced his candidacy in November (1982), Jackson was in the audience, not on the platform. And later, when Washington named his inner circle of political advisers, Jackson's name was conspicuously absent.'54 Despite Jackson's severely limited credentials as an insurgent, Black liberal and progressive forces reluctantly clustered around his potential candidacy. Randall Robinson, director of the influential lobbying group, Transafrica, and us Civil Rights Commissioner Mary Berry became firm supporters of Jackson. Even before the March on Washington took place, many of the mobilization's key organizers, including director Donna Brazile, pledged to work in Jackson's campaign. The Communist Party all but officially endorsed Jackson's challenge. Party leader Charlene Mitchell declared that the 'pressure of some Black leaders against such a candidacy can be directly tied to the ideological divisions that exist within the Afro-American community and the allegiances by most of their spokespersons to the Democratic Party and the monopoly interests it represents.' A Black candidate would 'deepen the unity of Black people and the working class, expanding the all-people's front against Reagan.'55

The Range of Jackson Support

As the probability of Jackson's candidacy increased, the civil rights leader was subjected to a barrage of criticism from nearly all quarters. For many Black leftists, Jackson-the-candidate was still a questionable commodity. Newspaper publisher Carlton Goodlett, a socialist, suggested that Jackson's 'efforts to influence the final selection of the Democratic nominee are foolish. America needs a social democratic party which offers hope and promise for using government to change the evils that dominate the present military—industrial political complex.'56 Washington Post journalists William Raspberry and Milton Coleman attacked Jackson's 'love of the limelight', and his contradictory policy positions. Warith Deen Muhammad, leader of the American Muslim Mission, which formerly had been the Nation of Islam under Elijah Muhammad, 'sharply' condemned Jackson, calling him an 'unsuitable choice' and 'a Black leader who has been created by the media'. Fauntroy now bluntly dismissed Jackson as 'not a politician', a

³³ Marable, Blackmater, pp 155-156.

Monroe Anderson, 'Jackson Didn't Steal the Show, But He was a Big Part of It', Change Trabane, 27 February 1981.

²⁵ Charlene Mitchell, 'Black Presidential Bid. For the Whole Working Class', Deely World, 9 June 1983.

M Editorial, 'Jackson Candidacy Raises Questions', San Reporter (San Francisco), 27 July 1983

leader who had 'alienated politicians in many key districts in the Black community'. Congressman Mickey Leland, chairman of the Black Caucus of the Democratic National Committee, hinted that Jackson might run simply 'to embellish his ego. There is fear that Jesse doesn't feel accountable to anybody but himself.'57 Veteran bureaucrat and civil rights authority Carl Rowan blasted Jackson repeatedly. 'There is no reason to believe that congress, the white power structure, will paymore heed to the advice of Jackson the presdential candidate than they have to Jackson the civil rights leader. As a political candidate, he would be of minimal, even negative consequences.'58 Former sncc activist John Lewis, now an Atlanta City Councilman, and Julian Bond argued that Jackson 'might divert Blacks from the effort to remove Reagan from the White House'. Other Black elected officials described him as 'an egocentric power seeker'. 59 With Kennedy's decision not to contest the 1984 nomination, Mondale stood to lose the most from a potential Jackson candidacy. In July, Mondale and his campaign staff politely attempted to discourage Jackson's entry. Mondale's senior adviser, John R. Reilly, asked Charles T. Manatt, the Democratic Party's national chairman, 'to give Mr Jackson a substantial party appointment if he left the race', but Manatt refused.60 The Republican Party responded to the Jackson threat without 'velvet gloves'. Only weeks after Jackson attacked the Reagan administration's policies in Central America and South Africa at Operation PUSH's 24-30 July convention in Atlanta federal auditors claimed that the organization had 'misused' over \$1.7 million in government contracts. The Reagan administration officials 'found fault' with the documentation of expenses, salaries and accounting procedures, but denied that the audits had anything to do with Jackson's potential campaign.61

But it was too late to stop the social mobilization. Throughout the fall, thousands of college students, workers, professionals and Black businessmen were flooding Jackson's public appearances, demanding that he announce his candidacy. Preston Love, the manager of Andrew Young's mayoral campaign in Atlanta, agreed to serve briefly as national campaign director. Several weeks later, Arnold Pinkney, a deputy director of the 1972 presidential campaign of Hubert H. Humphrey, and former president of the Cleveland, Ohio school board, assumed the position as national campaign leader. Fund-raisers and key staff personnel were also recruited. On 3 November, Jackson announced his candidacy before almost three thousand supporters at the Washington, D.C. Convention Center Hall. He criticized Reagan as 'pro-rich, pro-aristocratic, pro-agribusiness, pro-military, and pro-big

⁷⁷ Tony Brown, 'A Black President on the "Family Plan" ', Staterman, 14 April 1983

³⁸ Brown, 'Can Black Republicans Pull Off Presidential Race?'

^{**} Fay S. Joyce, 'Presidential Decision Nears for Jesse Jackson', New York Times, 12 September 1983

⁴⁰ Howell Rames, 'Mondale Backers Watching Jackson', New York Turns, 16 July 1983

⁶¹ Editorial, 'FOSH Takes Nothing for Granted', Carabae Pascenadar, 30 July 1983, Macco Dixon and Stuart Crome, 'Operation FOSH Condemns us War against People of Central America', Makisari, 26 August 1983; and "Two Jesse Jackson Groups Misused \$1.7 Million, us Auditors Say', Nav York Times, 20 August 1983.

⁴² Ronald Smothers, 'Decisions Pace Jackson on Key Contests and Workers in Field', New York Times, 25 November 1983, Smothers, 'Ohio Politician Says He'll Run Campaign For the Rev. Jackson', New York Times, 16 November 1983, and John W. Lewis, Jr., 'Jesse-Watching', Carolina Paccamater, 3 December 1983.

business'; and he condemned Mondale and other Democratic leaders for remaining 'too silent and too passive in the face of the Reagan administration's reduction of funds' for civil rights enforcement, increased unemployment, and its support for 'repressive foreign governments'. Mondale's 'acceptance' of the endorsement of Vrdolyak and the racist opponents of Harold Washington in late October had been a decisive reason for his own candidacy. 63 Democratic Party leaders were largely unimpressed. Mondale had a 'lock' on the nomination. Conservative Democrat John Glenn was declining rapidly in public opinion polls, and Mondale was the preference of 40 per cent of all Democratic voters as of late October. Jackson at 10 per cent remained a distant third, followed by five obscure white candidates. Jackson was the first choice of only 39 per cent of all Black Democratic voters, while Mondale had a solid 30 per cent of Black support. Mondale also had the endorsement of most national Afro-American political and union leaders, including the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and (unofficially) the NAACP and National Urban League. Several political observers believe that Jackson 'would need an almost monolithic Black vote' to receive as many as 200 delegates to the Democratic national convention. Others thought that Jackson would be hard pressed to get more than 75 delegates.' Given his late start and 'narrow political base', it was highly unlikely that Jackson would even be in the running by March 1984.64

Had Jackson run a 'traditional' electoral campaign, and attempted to project himself as a 'serious' candidate devoid of direct contact with any social movement, he would have quickly disappeared into the crowd. But several political factors converged at this precise time which permitted the electoral campaign to assume the shape of a democratic, anti-corporate social movement. The first, as previously discussed, was the timely absence of the bulk of the national Black petty-bourgeois leadership from the internal campaign apparatus. Jackson's checkered history, as well as the bold strategy of challenging the national Democratic Party's white establishment, kept most Black officials and civil rights leaders away from the campaign for months. The media interpreted this as a critical weakness: actually, it was a crucial strength of the campaign. The vacuum was filled, in part, by Black, Latino and white Marxists and liberal-leftists who had often been forced to operate on the periphery of Blacks' electoral efforts. Thus in Jackson's national office in Washington, D.C., one could find Barry Commoner as national vice-chairman of the campaign and chief adviser on environmental issues. Only four years before, Commoner had helped to found the Citizens Party in Cleveland, a loosely-knit, environmentalist and liberal network of about 18,000 members. Commoner had been the party's presidential candidate in 1980, when he received only a quarter of a million votes. Also in the national office was anti-nuclear-power activist Anna Gyorgy, a democratic socialist. Directly advising Jackson were political scientist Ronald Walters, a progressive Black nationalist who had been involved in the National Black Political Assembly throughout

⁴³ Ronald Smothers, 'Jackson Declares Formal Candidacy', New York Times, 4 November 1983

⁴⁴ Provocanve Candidate Poung Challenge for Party', and 'Poll Pinds Mondale Widens Lead Over Glenn', New York Traver, 4 November 1983

the 1970s; Carliotta Scott, a top aide to the Black socialist congressman Ron Dellums; and Jack O'Dell, a former adviser to Martin Luther King, Jnr., and an editor of the Black socialist journal, Freedomveys. Jackson's southeast regional director was Cleveland Sellers, who twenty years before had been SNCC programme secretary.

At local and statewide levels, the failure of many Black elected officials quickly to support Jackson also permitted Black nationalists, Marxists, left social democrats, and other liberal-left forces to seize key roles in the campaign. In Brooklyn and in dozens of other cities, the large Black nationalist bloc was mobilized by the National Black United Front, led by the Reverend Herbert Daughtry and activist Jitu Weusi; in Harlem, local organizers included Kevin Mercadel, Harlem coordinator of the Communist Party (CP), and Jim Haughton, veteran Black workers' organizer and leader of Harlem Fight-Back; in Louisville, Kentucky, the key white radical leader for Jackson was Anne Braden of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice; in Mississippi, the state coordinator was desegregation leader Hollis Watkins; in North Carolina, one key figure was Jennifer Henderson, director of the North Carolina Hunger Coalition; in Nashville, Tennessee, the city's co-chair was a Black Marxist-Lenmist, Frank Cuthbertson; in Portland, Oregon one central white activist was Beverley Stein, radical attorney and a national leader of the Democratic Socialists of America. In California, for example, an eclectic bloc of left political forces with histories of bitter factional fighting with one another—the CP, Workers World Party, Democratic Workers Party, the November 29th Committee for Palestine, the Line of March grouping, etc.—threw their collective resources and cadre behind Jackson. This is not to suggest that the inner core of the campaign was dominated by the left. The principal advisers—national campaign director Arnold Pinckey, Hatcher, New York businessman Eugene Jackson, and former Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton-had a record to the right of many of Mondale's Black supporters. They frequently tried to keep the mobilization within 'safe' bounds of bourgeois-democratic discourse, and often succeeded. But as in the Henry Wallace presidential campaign of 1948, many of the actual cadre and local leaders of the movement were to the left of the candidate himself. As the 1984 campaign progressed, their participation and deep involvement had an impact on the programmatic content of the electoral mobilization, and on Jackson's speeches. Ideologically, the campaign soon assumed a left-socialdemocratic tone, and at later instances, even became forthrightly antiimperialist and anti-corporate in content. The 'egocentric' proponent of Black Capitalism, in short, became one of the most left-wing national spokespersons of a national presidential campaign since the time of Eugene V. Debs.65

⁶⁶ "The Jackson Campaign in the South A Victory Already Won', Seathers Fight-Back, Vol. 9, July 1984, pp. 1-4, 5, Speeches by Anne Braden, Jim Hanghton, Jim Weuss, and Carhotta Scott, in HCIPA Nescaletter, Vol. 1 (April 1984), pp. 8-10, Carson, In Straggle, p. 151, and Barry Commoner, 'Jackson's Historic Campaign', New York Tieres, 10 July 1984

The Role of the Afro-American Churches

A second crucial factor was the unprecedented participation of the Black Church. As a Black minister, Jackson astutely comprehended that the Afro-American Church was the cornerstone of all community-based activism in the non-violent assault against Jim Crow laws. To be a 'good Christian' for Blacks twenty-five years ago meant to break 'unjust laws', to organize sit-ins, to register Blacks to vote. Legal segregation in American society had been destroyed, but institutional racism, unemployment and poverty remained. Now the task was to revive this moral and ideological protest tradition within the context of contemporary bourgeois electoral politics. Listening to Jackson's candidacy announcement, the Reverend Benjamin F. Chavis, Deputy Director of the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ, recognized immediately the conscious concepts of 'liberation theology' in the speech. 'His address was more of a sermon, in the tradition of great Black Baptist preachers, than a speech by an aspiring politician,' Chavis observed. 'Throughout his speech, many in the audience shouted "Amen . . ." Jackson's theology is a theology of liberation, informed by the Black Church religious experience and in dialogue with the religious and political experiences of the world community, particularly the Third World.'66 Throughout the campaign, Jackson would repeatedly attack the Reagan Administration for inverting 'the basic notions of our Judgeo-Christian ethic, encouraging us to spend millions to beat our ploughshares into swords, while leaving the disadvantaged begging for bread.' Jackson deliberately linked the issues of peace and social justice, calling not simply for the removal of Reagan from office, but for a moral and social transformation of the society as a whole. 'My concern is to lift the boats stuck on the bottom; to fight to provide education based on one's ability to pay; to fight to provide health care for all Americans on the basis of need not wealth; to provide a strong and adequate national defence, but end the massive waste, fraud, [and] abuse . . . to campaign on behalf of a national and fair immigration policy; to move beyond our current racial, sexual and class battleground to economic and political common grounds . . . 367

Thus Jackson successfully revived the basic moral and political principles of King, in his own way. The campaign throughout retained both the character of a Black religious revival, and the special idealism which motivated the desegregation efforts of the 1960s. Over 90 per cent of the Black clergy in the us endorsed Jackson within two months after his candidacy was announced. The National Baptist Convention, USA, with a membership of 6.5 million Blacks, was the first major organization to pour resources into the campaign. Convention president T.J. Jemison characterized his churches' support for Jackson as 'moral, spiritual and financial'. Other Black denominations, including the National Baptist Convention of America, with 2 million members, and the Pentecostal Church of God in Christ, with an additional 3.7 million followers, also endorsed Jackson. Black church leaders were active in all aspects of the campaign: transporting Black voters to the polls,

⁴⁶ Велјатил F Chavis, Jr., "Theology Under the Rainbow', The Pateurs, Vol. 67, May 1984, pp. 6-7 ⁴⁷ Ibul., pp. 6-7

distributing literature, organizing political motorcades, and raising the vast majority of Jackson's early funds. 68 In Pinkney's view the support of Black church leaders was as crucial as 'the endorsement of the AFL-CIO' for any other candidate. It brings masses of people, financial resources and a fantastic credibility to the candidacy.' For the Black clergy, stated Bishop Brooking, 'Jesse's running has made people understand the importance of government. The impact of it will be revolutionary.' Well before the end of the campaign, a synthesis of Black religious beliefs and progressive politics embodied in Jackson's 'Rainbow Coalition' became nearly hegemonic among the Afro-American social fraction. As King's SCLC was once described as the 'home mission department of the Black Church', the Rainbow Coalition had become the central 'political activity of the Black Church'.

The Campaign's Multinational Momentum

This powerful combination of religious appeals and a progressive political agenda rapidly captured the mood of most of the national Black electorate. In city after city, hundreds of thousands of Blacks participated actively in the electoral process for the first time in their lives. The initial caucus voting in Virginia on 25 March 1984 was typical of the response Jackson evoked from Blacks. In Norfolk, a city that is 35 per cent Black, a huge Black turnout gave Jackson all 163 delegates from the city. In Virginia Beach, a town with only 10 per cent Black voters, Black participation gave Jackson a plurality victory of 62 delegates, versus Mondale's fifty and Hart's thirty. One reporter from the Now York Times noted that 'at some sites party leaders ran out of registration forms. At others, participants had to stand in line for a couple of hours before they could get in. Throughout the Tidewater area, Jackson supporters filled the streets, using bull horns to exhort people to vote and distributing fliers and maps.' Statewide, Jackson won 31 per cent of Virginia's vote in the early delegate selection process. 70 Six days later, five thousand people came to a rally at 'African Square' in Harlem to hear the candidate. Members of the Black United Front, Alliance of Women Against Oppression, the Communist Party, and various new formations ('Jews for Jackson', 'Latinos for Jackson', 'Trade Unionists for Jackson', 'Asian-Americans for Jackson', etc.) were out in force. Daughtry, Commoner and Ramon Jimenez, cofounder of Latinos for Jackson, exhorted the crowd with speeches; cultural workers including Amiri Baraka, the National Black Theatre and others kept up the spirit. Finally Jackson arrived at the head of a 20,000 strong march. Electrifying the crowd, Jackson declared: 'We are going to be the conscience of this campaign!' On 3 April, a massive number of Black New Yorkers went to the polls. Despite the lack of any political advertising on behalf of Jackson—candidate Gary Hart spent over \$600,000 on advertisements—Jackson received 87 to 89 per

⁴⁸ Gerald M. Boyd, 'Black Churches a Mainspring of Jackson's Efforts', New York Times, 14 February 1984, 'Progressive Baptists Seek to Register 500,000' Beffals Challenger, 7 September 1983, and 'Gospel Fest to Raise Punds for Jackson', Beffals Challenger, 1 February 1984

^{**} Boyd, 'Black Churches a Manapeing of Jacksoo's Efforts', and Milton Reid, "The Black Church and the Rambow Coalition', Sw. Reporter, 16 July 1984.

No Gerald M. Boyd, 'Jackson's Virginia Showing Rode on Surge of Support in Tidewater', New York Times, 26 March 1984

cent of the Afro-American vote statewide, and 34 per cent of all ballots in New York City. In five Congressional districts with a sizeable number of Afro-American voters (Districts 6, 11, 12, 16, 18) in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and the Bronx, Jackson received 183,739 votes (63.5 per cent) to Mondale's 81,206 votes (28.1 per cent) and Hart's 24,477 votes (8.5 per cent). In Harlem, despite Congressman Rangel's vigorous and expensive campaigning for Mondale, Jackson thrashed the former Vice-President by a margin of more than eight to one. Statewide, Jackson received 92 per cent of the vote of Blacks age 18–29; 36 per cent of the vote of all families earning \$12,500 or less per annum; and two thirds of the support of all first-time voters.⁷¹

A third element contributing to the success of the campaign was its multinational character. Within the framework of 'Rambow Theology', to employ Chavis's term, religious activists within the mobilization believed that 'racism and sexism are sins that defy' the notion that 'all human-beings (are created) in the image of God. The call for African, Hispanic, Asian and Native Americans to join with progressive Anglo-Americans, women and the poor to work together politically and spiritually is to affirm through social action the oneness of humanity created by God in God's image. 772 The actual model of a successful 'Rainbow Coalition' had recently developed in Boston, around the 1983 mayoral campaign of Black socialist Mel King. King lost in the runoff election to a South Boston populist, Ray Flynn, but his 'Rainbow Coalition' achieved several major victories: it increased Black registration significantly (about 95 per cent of all Blacks voted for King); over 20 per cent of the white voters and 66 per cent of Latinos supported King; and thousands of gays and lesbians, feminists, progressive clergy, labour leaders and Blacks were brought together for a common cause, in that racially-divided city.73 The general political approaches taken during the King 'Rainbow' mobilization were once again used at a national level, but with a candidate who was ideologically to the right of King.

Most Jackson campaign literature reflected this ethnic pluralism. In flyers to Hispanic voters printed in English and Spanish, Jackson called for bilingual education programmes, application of the 1965 Voting Rights Act to combat the 'gerrymandering' and lack of 'voting rights' of Hispanics, and opposed US 'aid to rebels trying to covertly overthrow the Government of Nicaragua'. Such positions were another to Cuban-American immigrants, but found widespread praise

⁷¹ Kevin Mercadel, 'Harlem Communists and the 1984 Elections', Black Laboration Journal, Vol. 7, Summer 1984, pp. 11–13, Frank Lynn, 'Primary Poll', New York Times, 5 April 1984, Akinahiju C. Ota, 'History Was Happening in Harlem', Georgian, 11 April 1984.

²² Chavis, "Theology under the Rainbow", p. 8 Chavis also notes that 'nambow theology should not be viewed as an attempt to engage in some vague type of pluraham that lacks theological claimty. Rather it is a justice-seeking theology that is evolving out of concrete political peaxis."

⁷⁵ James Green, "The Making of Mel King's Rainbow Coalition: Political Changes in Boston, 1963–1983', Rashed America, Vol. 17–18, November 1983–February 1984, pp. 9-33. Green observes that 'one-third of the white voters interviewed' after the Boston mayoral election stated they 'would not vote for a Black candidate under any arrangement, no matter how appealing the candidate's proposals happened to be' (p. 13).

[™] 'Jesse Jackson Acerca de los Asuntos Hupanos', campaign pamphlet, Jackson for President Committee, Washington, D.C., 1984

among Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans. In New York state's primary, Jackson won 34 per cent of the Puerto Rican vote despite the nearly unanimous endorsement of Mondale by Puerto Rican officials.75 In San Jose, California, at the 12-13 May Mexican American Political Association Endorsing Convention (MAPA), members substantially embraced Jackson's progressive policy agenda, which included opposition to the repressive Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill, then being debated in Congress. Despite predictions that Mondale would be a 'shoo-in for the MAPA endorsement', nearly five hundred 'Mapistas' voted for Jackson. Mondale received the Chicano group's endorsement by the slender margin of four votes.76 Three weeks later, Jackson received almost one-fifth of California's Latino vote. In Arizona, a state with a Black population of only 3 per cent, Jackson received 14 per cent of the Democratic caucus vote on 14 April. Significant support here came from Chicano state representative Iesus Higuera and several Native American Indian leaders in the state. 77 Jackson was the only candidate to attend the annual conference of the National Congress of American Indians, and he used the opportunity to declare: 'On a moral level, how America treats American Indians is the "litmus-test" for this country's character.' Many Indian leaders were convinced. 78 As Indian journalist Buck Martin observed: 'Jackson was either extremely well briefed, or else there is a natural affinity between his and Indian thinking ... Jackson is demonstrating people of colour do not have to be satisfied with the existing political leadership. He is a national Minority leader who has captured the imagination of people of colour, other than Blacks. 779 Among Asian and Pacific American voters, Jackson again received a strong response. Under the coordination of Cindy Ng, Bill Chong and Lyle Wing, 'Asians for Jackson' committees sprang up in Honolulu, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, New York, and other cities. Such groups raised over \$15,000 toward the national campaign. Jackson received 21 per cent of the Asian-American vote in California, and 25 per cent in New Jersey.80

1

The Rainbow Programme

Among white voters, Jackson found support among liberal-left peace activists, and less predictably, among thousands of unemployed and low-income blue collar workers. The Rainbow Coalition's peace platform was qualitatively to the left of any Democrat's in recent memory: a 20 to 25 per cent cut in the Pentagon budget, with billions of dollars in funds reallocated to domestic social programmes; a bilateral nuclear freeze; the removal of the Pershing–II and cruise missile from Western Europe, and US–Soviet negotiations to reduce both sides' nuclear

⁷⁵ Hector Rivers, 'Latinos Aim to Defeat Reaganism', Dush World, 9 June 1984

William Gallegos, 'MAPA Endorsing Convention Sets Progressive Agenda', Usity, 15 May-14 June 1084

⁷⁷ Kevin J Kelley, "To Confront or Conciliate. That is Jackson's Question", Generalist, 13 June 1984.
Also see Fsy S. Joyce, 'Jackson, in California, Presses for Minority Votes', New York Times, 17 May 1984, and 'Jackson Woos Americans', New York Times, 18 May 1984.

⁷⁸ Bob Massey, 'What's in Store for Democratic Race' Usity, 20 April-10 May 1984

⁷⁹ Buck Martin, 'Editorial An Indian Viewpoint', National Minority Campus Chronich, Vol. II, May 1944, p. z.

^{40 &#}x27;Assan-Pacific Americans', The Rambur Organicar, Vol. 1, July 1984, pp. 475

arsenals; unconditional opposition to US military intervention in Central America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and southern Africa; and the cancellation of all strategic defence initiatives including the ballistic missile defence system and anti-satellite weapons. Jackson repeatedly called for normalized diplomatic relations with Cuba, an end of all military aid to the El Salvador regime, and the destruction of the US military complex in Honduras. Reverend William Sloan-Coffin, a prominent peace leader, termed Jackson 'a genuine peace candidate. Be it the need to reduce the military budget, or to end American interventions in Central America, or to reverse the nuclear arms race on every peace issue, Jackson stands head and shoulders above the other candidates. 281 Other key peace leaders who endorsed the campaign and travelled with the candidate included Richard Deats, Executive Secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation; Dave Dellinger, Mobilization for Survival leader; Rev. Robert Moore, Executive Director, Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament; Sr. Marjorie Tuite, Director of Citizen Action, Church Women United; and Rev. William Howard, former President, National Council of Churches, On virtually every major public issue—from economic policy to the environment, women's rights to foreign affairs—Jackson represented the left wing of Democratic Party opinion, Only George McGovern, former liberal Senator and 1972 presidential nominee, stood as far to the left as the Black candidate; but with McGovern's withdrawal from the race in early March, only Jackson ideologically represented the peace, liberal and left constituencies.

In economically depressed areas, thousands of white workers were attracted by other aspects of the Rainbow Coalition programme. In Homestead, Pennsylvania, for example, Local 1397 of the United Steelworkers bucked their national leadership by endorsing Jackson. The 7000-member local had lost half its jobs in recent plant closures, and Jackson's calls for legislation to restrict capital flight across state lines won the approval of white steelworkers. Mike Stout, a member of the local's executive committee, explained to the press that Jackson was 'the only one talking about the issues. He is the only one talking about creating jobs for steel workers who have lost them and of taking money from the military budget and applying it to jobs here at home. 182 In several rural states, Jackson campaigned effectively among small farmers by riding around on a farm tractor. With less symbolism but more to the point, he called for extensive federal assistance to family farmers to reduce their estimated \$227 billion debt. In Columbia, Missouri, hundreds of white small farmers rallied on behalf of the candidate. Many of them had paper bags 'over their heads for fear of reprisal from the Farmers Home Administration', which controlled their farm mortgages. After giving Jackson a standing ovation, Roger Allison, leader of the Missouri American Agriculture Movement, announced for his

⁸¹ 'Jesse Jackson: Study War No More', pamphlet published by 'Peace Leaders for Jackson', Washington, D.C., 1984 Also see Reese Erlich, 'Why the Peace Movement Must Support Jesse for President', Usery, 20 April-10 May 1984

¹⁰ 'Women, Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalmon', pamphlet published by the Alliance Against Women's Oppression, San Francisco, May 1984; Howell Raines, 'Democrats Focus on Key Delegates', New York Times, 17 May 1984, Peter Shapiro, 'How Jesse Jackson Has Opened the Doors for Workers', Unity, 25 May-14 June 1984.

organization that 'farmers, like Blacks, are on the bottom—locked out. Together we will form a Rainbow Coalition, and we shall overcome.'83 Subsequently, the Ohio-based Farm Labor Organization contributed its own organizers to campaign for the Black candidate.

In New York state, almost one-third of all union members voted for Jackson, as well as 36 per cent of all women working outside their homes. Some white bus drivers in predominantly Afro-American locals in Boston and Philadelphia also challenged their leadership by backing Jackson. White labour support such as this, combined with a fraction of white liberal support, produced small totals for Jackson in states with Black electorates of five per cent or less: 11 per cent in Wisconsin; 12 per cent in Connecticut; 8 per cent in Rhode Island; 9 per cent in Nebraska and Oregon. In Vermont, the Rainbow Coalition won nearly 15 per cent of the state's April caucus vote; fewer than a thousand Blacks live in the entire state. In states with large numbers of minorities, Jackson did generally worse: his shares of the white vote were only 4 per cent in Illinois and Pennsylvania, 3 per cent in Georgia, 2 per cent in Florida, and barely one per cent in Alabama. But as the campaign progressed, more white voters began to look beyond race to identify with Jackson's progressive agenda. In California, only half of the 8,000 participants in Jackson's Democratic caucuses were Black; 28 per cent were white, 14 per cent Latino, 7 per cent Asian, and one per cent American Indian.84 In the state's 5 June primary election, Jackson won over 10 per cent of all whites' votes. By late April, according to a New York Times poll, 21 per cent of all white voters and 31 per cent of all Democrats had an 'overall favorable opinion' of Jackson. Sixty-three per cent of whites thought that 'he had eased the path for future Black candidates' and another 28 per cent felt he 'had earned a say' in the Democratic platform on US foreign policy.85

The most interesting question concerning Jackson's support among whites was his, at best, lukewarm standing among the traditional liberal petty bourgeoiste and the white left. On feminist-related issues, for instance, Jackson was clearly the most progressive candidate. Despite his personal opposition to abortion, Jackson called for governmentfunded abortion, massive social spending on women's service programmes, and expanded affirmative action for women in the labour force. Despite Mondale's long-standing opposition to gender quotas which would advance women workers, the National Organization of Women endorsed the Minnesota Democrat. The 200,000-member liberal feminist formation declared that Mondale, not Jackson, 'understood women's issues' and could more likely 'unite the Democratic coalition'. For different reasons, many white socialist-feminists abstained from the Rainbow Coalition. One radical-feminist publication, Off Our Backs, argued that Jackson was clearly 'committed to the Black community ... but is he really committed to being a candidate for feminists?.

¹³ Roger Allison and Dec Reilly, 'Missouri Fatha Director Refuses Block Order to Meet with Fathers', and Roger Allison, 'Fath Issues Radio Hosts Jackson', North American Fathers, Vol. I, 25 April 1984, ²⁴ 'California Delegates Names for Jackson', Satharanto Observer, 15-21 March 1984, and Massey, 'What's in Store for Democratic Race?'

[#] Howell Raines, 'Standing of Jackson Increases in Poll', New York Times, 29 April 1984

White radical feminists had to be as 'sceptical about Jackson's campaign as of any other political campaign'. White gays and lesbians also tended to vote their race rather than sex interests. Prominent gay socialist Harry Britt, a San Francisco Council member, urged constituents to vote for Hart. Lesbian and gay Democratic clubs in New York endorsed Mondale, despite Jackson's support for expanding the 1964 Civil Rights Act 'to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation'. and his advocacy of an executive order 'banning discrimination based on sexual orientation by government agencies, federal contractors and the military'. Neither Hart nor Mondale, fearful of offending homophobic interests, endorsed Jackson's position. Gil Gerald, executive director of the National Coalition of Black Gays, joined the Jackson staff but was perplexed at the candidate's failure to win significant numbers of white lesbian and gay votes. Most white homosexual activists were 'placing bets with the likely winners—Mondale or Hart—as a vehicle to get to the convention', Gerald suggested.87 Jackson attributed the problem of winning liberal whites to their lack of regard for the intelligence and hard work of Black people. It remains a moral challenge, however, to white leadership to make judgements based on character and not based on race.'88

The Bigs for Mondale

The success of Jackson was all the more remarkable given the political obstacles it had to confront at virtually every level. Extremists picketed several Rainbow Coalition offices throughout the country. In Jersey City, New Jersey, five Jackson workers distributing literature were 'arrested, verbally abused, harassed and threatened' by police officers. Arresting policemen threatened one Black campaign worker, warning that they would 'break the lock on the cage and beat his head in'.89 Democratic Party officials tried at first to ignore Jackson's presence in the race. After the New Hampshire primaries, when most of the would-be presidential aspirants dropped from the race, members of the House of Representatives' Democratic Study Group drafted a joint fund-raising letter to aid House candidates with Mondale's and Hart's signature. After mailing over 60,000 letters, somebody finally noticed that Jackson was still in the race, and hadn't been invited to sign! And despite his repeated overtures to white voters, not a single white member of Congress, governor, or white-owned newspaper ever endorsed Jackson. Collectively, as Jackson stated, they were 'the first to urge me to fall in behind a white candidate'.91

Under genuinely democratic circumstances, Mondale should have been denied the Democratic Party's nomination in 1984. As other white candidates dropped out of the contest, Gary Hart also emerged as an

[&]quot;Women, Jesse Jackson and the Rambow Coalmon'

⁸⁷ Dan Bellam, 'Improved Views Earn Jackson More Support', Guerdian, 25 April 1984

^{*} Gerald M. Boyd, 'Jackson Assesses Low White Vote', New York Times, 12 March 1984

Tree Arrested and Threatened by Jersey Police While Distributing Jesse Jackson Material, Buffale Challeger, 23 April 1984

[&]quot;And Jackson Makes Three', New York Tower, 28 March 1984

M. Kevin J. Kelley, "Mondale's Nomination Might Be Suicide Pact for Democratis", Gaurdian, 20 June 1984.

effective 'neo-liberal' challenger to the rather lacklustre choice of the party machine. Hart won the Democratic primaries in New England, Florida, Ohio, Indiana, and all of the western states. Hart consistently captured the support of white young people, white families with annual incomes above \$35,000, and the 'independent' Democrats who had voted either for Reagan or for independent presidential candidate John Anderson in the 1980 election.92 The final combined national vote of Jackson (19 per cent) and Hart (36 per cent) was significantly larger than that of Mondale (38.5 per cent). Mondale did win about 18 per cent of the total Afro-American vote, and usually a majority of the votes of other national minorities. But the former Vice-President had three decisive advantages over his opponents, which were, in the final analysis, absolutely critical. The first, of course, was money. By late May, Mondale had collected \$18mn in campaign contributions, against Hart's \$9mn and Jackson's paltry \$1.7mn. Mondale received another \$800,000 from 132 AFL-CIO dominated political action committees. In New Hampshire alone, a state which Mondale lost to Hart, his campaign exceeded legal expenditure ceilings by almost \$100,000.93 These spending ratios neatly compare with the final percentage of delegate votes each candidate ultimately obtained at the San Francisco convention: Mondale, 2191 votes (56.8 per cent); Hart, 1200.5 votes (31.1 per cent); Jackson, 465.5 votes (12.1 per cent). Second, the Democratic National Committee and Manatt did everything possible to assist Mondale and to undermine Jackson's leverage within the party. To be awarded delegates at the national convention, presidential candidates had to win at least twenty per cent of the popular primary vote in a congressional district. Given that the bulk of the Black and Hispanic electorate is concentrated in a relatively small number of urban Congressional districts, a minority candidate like Jackson could emerge with substantial victories in metropolitan areas, but receive only a handful of delegates, because of a failure to receive 20 per cent of the vote in overwhelmingly white districts. As a further complication, Democratic leaders also named 586 'superdelegates' not selected by the public. By mid-May, Mondale had received the public endorsement of 107 Senators and Representatives, plus the backing of 78 mayors and local officials from this group. 95 Jackson repeatedly attacked the 'lack of democracy' within the Democratic Party's rules, but failed to obtain any redress.%

Thus the Jackson campaign was pressured throughout the spring to prove that a Black presidential challenge burdened by undemocratic rules would be 'viable'. In Mississippi, Jackson defeated both Mondale and Hart, winning almost half of the votes in the 17 March caucuses. But because of the state's regressive caucus rules, Jackson and Mondale

²² In the New York Democratic primary, for example, Hart received about 45 per cent of the votes of whites age 18 to 44, one third of the vote of whites age 18 to 44, one third of the vote of whites whose family incomes exceeded \$55,000 annually, and 56 per cent of all Democrats' support who had voted for John Anderson four years before See 'Primary Poll', New York Times.

^{*} Kevin J. Kelley, The Long and Winding Trail-That Leads Nowhere? Guardian, 6 June 1984

M Roll-Call Vote on President', New York Timer, 20 July 1984.

¹⁵ Howell Raines, 'Democrats Focus on Key Delegates', New York Times, 17 May 1984

^{**} Howell Raines, 'Democratic Drive for Unity Starts Renewed Fighting', New York Times, 6 May 1984, Wallace Turner, 'Complaints by Jackson Get No Action by Party', New York Times, 11 May 1984.

received roughly the same number of delegates. After other delegates were selected by white party leaders, Mondale had twice as many delegates as Jackson. In Pennsylvania Jackson earned 17 per cent of the statewide vote, but at the convention, Mondale (who received 45 per cent of the state's vote) had 177 delegate votes to Jackson's 18. In Arkansas, Mondale narrowly defeated Jackson in statewide caucuses, 6411 votes to 6011, while Hart ran a poor third. But Mondale eventually won 26 delegate votes, Hart received 9, and Jackson only 7. In the Ohio Democratic primary, Jackson received 251,332 votes, about 16 per cent of the total, but out of 154 statewide delegates, received only eight. In several instances, state Democratic Party committees refused to provide financial resources for the elected Jackson delegates to travel to the San Francisco convention. Before the last primaries, Jackson frequently spoke about the negative impact of the party's rules on his movement. Millions of Blacks, Hispanics and progressive whites who had voted for him had been effectively disenfranchised. Warning that he would use 'all procedures available' to win their full representation, Jackson declared that Party unity is one thing, but we need justice.'97

But one of Mondale's decisive advantages over both Hart and Jackson was his support from substantial elements of the Black petty-bourgeois leadership, which produced several critical statewide victories with Black votes. In Alabama's Democratic primary, the state's most influential Black official, Richard Arrington, organized dozens of phone banks and put hundreds of city workers into the street to distribute Mondale campaign literature. The mayor and Joe Reed, chairman of the all-Black Democratic Conference, urged Alabama Blacks to be realistic and not to 'throw their votes away'. On primary day, Jackson won 60 per cent of the state's Black vote, and Blacks voted for Jackson over Mondale by a margin of more than three to one outside Birmingham. But in Birmingham, where the Black turnout was twice as high as in the rest of the state, Afro-Americans voted two to one for Mondale. Since virtually no Blacks voted for Hart, Mondale won the state by a narrow margin.99 In Georgia, Coretta Scott King, Bond and other petty-bourgeois leaders championed Mondale's 'civil rights credentials', and the Minnesota Democrat won almost one-third of the Black vote. In Philadelphia, Black mayor Wilson Goode used slightly different tactics to aid Mondale. Jackson captured 75 per cent of the Black vote in Pennsylvania, and most Black officials allied with Goode endorsed Jackson, according to one Black union leader, because they feared being 'seen as out of control of their constituents. But they made damn sure that (Jackson) got no delegates.' Thousands of sample ballots were distributed to Blacks with Jackson's name at the top of the slate, but with the names of Mondale delegates at the bottom. Many

⁷⁷ 'Carolina Party "Favors" Jackson as Favorite Son', New York Times, 12 March 1984; Kevin J Kelley, 'Jackson Movin' on Up', Guerdien, 18 March 1984, Amin Baraka, 'On the Jesse Jackson Campaign to Date', Usery, 9 March 1984

Ronald Smothers, 'Black Leaders Who Back Mondale in Alabama Arguing for Pragmatism', New York Times, 12 March 1984

John Corry, "Frontine" Views Alabama Primary', New York Times, 5 April 1984

Blacks voted for Jackson but simultaneously voted for Mondale's delegates to the convention. 100

Not without some cause, many Afro-Americans began to view Black Mondale supporters as little better than traitors to the Black movement. One journalist, Gerald A. Anderson, bitterly denounced Goode, Young, Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley, Coretta Scott King, Bond and others as betrayers of 'the masses of Black people', who had sold 'the Black vote for personal gain'. 101 Most Afro-American petty-bourgeois leaders lacked the integrity of a Rangel or Bond, who had to justify their allegiance to Mondale before increasingly hostile Black constituencies. Black leaders in Congress, who had recently touted Mondale, attempted desperately to join the Rainbow Coalition. In early June, fifteen of the twenty-one Black Caucus members met with Jackson for three hours, and pledged their unswerving fidelity. Congressman Julian C. Dixon declared that the group was 'united behind Rev. Jackson', a Black leader who has spoken out not only for minorities, but has raised very serious issues that we think many Americans are concerned about'. 102 John Lewis suggested that Jackson was now unquestionably 'the undisputed Black leader . . . He's creating the climate for some Black man or Black woman to come along and be elected President of this country.' With the vast majority of NAACP members supporting Jackson, Hooks had little choice except to applaud his effort. With the fervour of a late convert, Hooks exclaimed: 'Jackson has proved to the white community what many Blacks knew all along: that Blacks are intelligent enough to deal with Presidential issues.'103 Nevertheless, for the bulk of white America, the Jackson campaign seemed to be almost non-existent. In one April 1984 poll, 18 per cent of all whites said 'they would not vote for a Black man for President, even if he were qualified and was a party nominee'. As political theorist Clarence Lusane observed: 'With the exception of a relatively small proportion of progressives, whites of every social class have rejected the Jackson candidacy. To put it bluntly, working-class whites have not responded in massive numbers to the Rainbow call . . . Throughout us history, with some notable exceptions, the racist defence of their privileged status relative to minorities has inhibited the development of even a rudimentary class consciousness in the white sector of the us working class. In politics this has often enough been reflected in white workers and Black workers taking divergent or even diametrically opposite positions on the key questions of the day. This dynamic is once again being played out in the Jesse Jackson campaign and obscuring it will not make it go away. If anything, the forthrightness with which Jackson has spoken to the key

¹⁰⁰ Howell Raines, 'Democratic Contenders Turning to Second Half', New York Times, 12 April 1984, Phil Gailey, 'Philadelphis's Vote is Seen as a Factor in Jackson Influence', New York Times, 9 April 1984, Bob Sanders, 'Philadelphis Story: Winner Loses and Loser Wins', Gasenheir, 25 April 1984, 100 Gersid A. Anderson, 'A Question of Blackness', Charlestee Chronoth, 14 July 1984. Anderson observed that 'Goode had not fitted his small frame into the big Mayor's chair before be issued a statement endorsing Walter Mondale' As 'the son of a sharecropper, perhaps the bome mentality of the early environment of Mayor Goode still lingers' Julian Bond had never 'sponsored one bill for the benefit of Black people', and only 'goes where the buck is' Coretta Scott King, 'the professional widow', bad only one 'claim to firme', her late husband Martin

^{102 &#}x27;Cancus Solidly Behind Rev. Jackson', Sacramento Observer, 14-20 June 1984

¹⁰⁰ Fay S. Joyce, 'Jackson Candidacy Is Giving New Shape to Politics in U.S.', New York Times, 13 April 1984.

issues facing the major social reform movements only serves to throw the problem into sharper relief.'104

Jackson and the Jewish Community

The greatest mistake in the Jackson mobilization was committed by the candidate himself. Black reporter Milton Coleman heard Jackson use an anti-semitic slur: he referred to Jews as 'Hymies' and to New York City as 'Hymietown'. For much of February and early March, the campaign was bogged down with charges that Jackson was an anti-semite. Jackson finally admitted his remarks were wrong and apologized, but his initial denials undercut his 'moral standing' among many constituents. Progressive Jews found it impossible to work within the Rainbow Coalition, and hundreds of liberal and left activists, Jewish and non-Jewish, were lost permanently from the mobilization. Moreover, within the context of 'Rainbow Theology', any statement reflecting anti-semitic views was clearly intolerable.

Jackson's difficulties with American Jewish leaders were nothing new. In 1979 Andrew Young, then us Ambassador to the United Nations, was fired for his unauthorized discussion with PLO observer Zehdi Labib Terzi. In the immediate outburst of controversy after Young's dismissal, Jackson met with PLO leader Yasser Arafat. A key member of Jackson's braintrust, Jack O'Dell, is a member of the Board of Directors of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, and has been a proponent of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. 105 Jackson's cordial relations with Syrian President Hafez Assad paved the way for the dramatic release of Lt. Robert Goodman, a captured us Navy pilot, in December 1983. Domestically, almost alone among major civil rights leaders, Jackson and Operation PUSH cultivated close relations with international Arab groups. The League of Arab States donated \$200,000 and Libya \$16,000 to Operation PUSH-both of which were legal contributions. Thus, well before his presidential candidacy, Jewish leaders had grave misgivings about Jackson. In 1983 the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'naı B'rith circulated a 19-page critique of Jackson which was leaked to the media, a document weaving together quotations taken out of context made by Jackson since 1973. The national leaders of the American Jewish Committee met with Jackson in the fall, and let it be known that they were 'disturbed by his views on Israel and the Mideast generally'. In November 1983, a 'Jews Against Jackson' group was formed by the ultra-conservative Jewish Defense League. Militant right-wing Zionists threw pickets around Jacksonfor-President campaign offices and at his home, chanting 'Ruin, Jessie, Ruinl' Even after Jackson's public apology, when the candidate spoke

³⁴ Hud, and Clarence Lusene, 'Building a Progressive Alliance—Where's the Rambow' pamphler, 'Jesse Jackson's Challenge', San Francisco 1984, p. 15

In the Rainber Organice, O'Dell described the support of 'the right of the Palestman people to self-determination as the key to peace in the Middle East' O'Dell, 'From "White" Democratic Primary to the Rainbow Coalition', Rainber Organice, Vol. 1, July 1984, p. 3.

before a Jewish audience, pickets chanted, 'Jackson is a racist pig' and 'Jew-hater!' Jackson was constantly subjected to death threats. 106

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Most Black supporters of Jackson, including those who had criticized their candidate's language, recognized that he was being unfairly judged. Immediately following Jackson's apology, a group of prominent Jackson supporters in New York issued a statement chastizing their candidate: "The language admitted by Jesse Jackson 18 impermissible when said by anyone on or off the record. It is not in the best interest of the Black and Jewish communities, that have a communality of ethnic victimization, to permit these unacceptable remarks to divide our long-standing and vital relationships.' Jackson campaign aides caucused with leaders of the progressive New Jewish Agenda, in an attempt to restore political harmony. After Jackson's apology, a number of Jewish leaders urged a reconciliation between Blacks and Jews. Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform), declared: I hope this matter is now behind us . . . we welcome Mr Jackson's call to renew the dialogue among Blacks and Jews. We have indeed much more in common than in conflict.'107 Yet criticism of Jackson increased. Howard I. Friedman, president of the American Jewish Committee, insisted on 27 February that Jackson's mea culpa was insufficient. While we welcome this particular acknowedgement', Friedman suggested, 'we call upon him now to re-examine other statements he has made in the past about Jews, about Israel, about the Holocaust, about so-called Jewish power." One ADL leader, Leonard Zakim, explained that both the American Jewish Committee and the ADL were not genuinely interested in a dialogue with the Rainbow Coalition. 'What you've got is the Jewish agencies condemning Jews Against Jackson and Meir Kahane's Jewish Defense League and then playing the same kind of politics behind closed doors', stated Zakım. İt's stupid and sad.'109

Blacks were perturbed by two factors. First, Jackson's positions on the Middle East were hardly those of the PLO. Repeatedly, Jackson referred to Israel as being 'the centre of democracy in the Middle East'. He advocated 'Israel's right to exist with security and within internationally recognized boundaries'. He did not oppose the 1977 Camp David accords, nor did he ever call for the creation of a 'democratic, secular Palestine', which is the PLO's official position. Jackson criticized American military aid to Israel, and like nearly all Black Americans, opposed

¹⁰⁸ Fay S. Joyce, 'Jackson Outlines His Views-to Jewish Group', New York Times, 28 February 1984, Kevin J. Kelley, 'Jackson Tries to Explain', Georghes, 7 March 1984, Kevin J. Kelley, 'Rainbow Repair Work as Jackson Reaches Out to Jewi' Jackson received more death threats during the campaign than all other candidates combined Fearful of Black retalistion if Jackson was assessinated during the primaries, Reagan's Secretary of the Treasury, Donald T. Regan, authorized Secret Service protection of Jackson more than two and a half months ahead of the other Democratic presidential candidates. Immediately following the San Francisco convention, Secret Service protection of Jackson was withdrawn, despite Jackson's repeated requests for its continuation. See 'Secret Service Protecting Jackson Months Before Other Candidates', New York Times, 12 November 1983, and 'Jackson Request Denied On Secret Service Guards', New York Times, 23 July 1984

¹²⁷ Kelley, 'Rainbow Repair Work', Morris U. Schapes, 'Around the World', Javish Currents, Vol. 38, April 1984, p. 46

Schappes, 'Around the World'

¹⁰ Ben Bradlee, Jr., 'Jackson-Jewish Group Meeting Off, Then On', Buston Globe, 25 February 1984

the growing military and economic relationship between the South African regime and Israel. In the context of international politics, Jackson's Middle East policies were roughly similar to those of Pope John Paul II. As one reporter put it, 'Jackson is attacked because he has breached a wall of silence; he has dared to speak out on a peace issue which had been taboo in American politics.'¹¹⁰ In another radical departure from us bourgeois politics, Jackson actively courted the 1.5 million Arab-American constituency. In November 1983, for example, Jackson spoke before a national organization of Arab-Americans and invited them to join the Rainbow Coalition. Subsequently in Houston, Detroit, Boston and in other cities, thousands of Arab-Americans contributed to Jackson's effort. 'Other politicians have been intimidated by the Jewish lobby', stated Essa Sackiah, an Arab-American leader in Houston. 'It's time to come out of the closet and be a voice, and Reverend Jackson has given us that opportunity.'¹¹¹

The second factor was the historically complex relationship between progressive Black political organizations and the Jewish community. For over two decades, Afro-American activists had been increasingly critical of Jewish involvement in Black political affairs. Older Black progressives recalled that Jewish contributions had largely financed the desegregation campaigns of the CORE in the early 1960s. But with core's espousal of 'Black Power', incoming funds stopped almost instantly.112 When sNCC published a brief essay on Palestine in its July 1967 newsletter, the executive director of the American Jewish Congress attacked the article as 'shocking and vicious anti-Semitism'. Almost every Jewish leader denounced SNCC, and moderate civil rights officials, including Urban League leader Whitney Young, Rustin and Randolph, also attacked the group. 113 Black nationalists such as Malcolm X had long attacked 'Zionist control' over the NAACP and other civil rights agencies. In 1959, Malcolm X argued that 'Jews sap the very life-blood of the so-called Negroes to maintain the state of Israel, its armies and its continued aggression against our brothers in the East...We make no distinction between Jews and non-Jews so long as they are all white.'114 As Blacks began to emerge within electoral politics and the trade unions, they often conflicted with Jewish leaders who, in previous generations, had acquired positions of authority. Many Jewish groups actively opposed racial quotas in affirmative action programme, while Blacks demanded quotas as an effective means to redress discrimination. Black intellectual Harold Cruse spoke for many Afro-American nationalists in 1967: 'One cannot deny the horror of the European Jewish holocaust, but for all practical purposes... Jews have not suffered in the United States. They have, in fact, done exceptionally well on every level of endeavour...The average Negro is not going to buy the propaganda that Negroes and Jews are "brother-sufferers" in the same

^{110 &}quot;The Democrars and Palestine", Polistine Focus, No. 7, July 1984, p. 1

¹¹¹ See 'Jackson on the Araba', New York Times 20 March, 1984, and S. Joyce 'Jackson Outlines His Views to Jewish Group' 28 April 1984

¹¹² Meier and Rudwick, Care, pp 336, 411.

¹¹³ Carson, In Straggle, pp 167-169

¹¹⁴ Lincoln, The Black Maximus in America, pp. 148–149, 166. Also see Robert G. Weisboro, Butterment Encenter. The Afro-American and the American Jan, Westport 1970, pp. 18, 93–97, 107, 148, 152, 182.

boat.'115 Speaking in Atlanta in April 1970, Stokely Carmichael was even more blunt: 'Whenever Jewish senators take the floor, they wage propaganda for Israel. They [say] Africa has no right to have any guns, but Israel has the right to have all the guns she wants...Israel [occupies] land in Palestine that doesn't belong to [it].'116

In the 1970s and 1980s, Jewish support for Black progressive candidates was mixed. Harold Washington received about 35 per cent of Chicago's Jewish vote in the 1983 mayoral race—significantly higher than his overall share of the white vote, but lower than the typical support Jews have given to other white liberal Democrats. Only half of all Philadelphia Jews supported Wilson Goode in his successful race for mayor in 1983. 117 The case of New York City is most instructive. In 1973, Jewish districts voted overwhelmingly for Jewish moderate Abraham Beame over Puerto Rican liberal Herman Badillo. In the 1982 Democratic gubernatorial primary, Jews voted heavily for New York mayor Ed Koch, a 'neoconservative' and aggressive opponent of Black and Hispanic interests, while Blacks substantially backed an Italian-American liberal Mario Cuomo, who won. Increasingly Afro-Americans, Latinos and Asian-Americans charged that Jews maintained a disproportionate share of political power in New York City. As of 1984, non-whites comprised over 48 per cent of the city's population, compared with about 24.5 per cent for Jews. Yet of the three citywide officials, two were Jewish, and of the five borough presidents four were Jewish. As Arnold Linhardt of New York's American Jewish Congress noted, Jews have become 'more receptive to candidates and political platforms' which favour 'issues such as neighbourhood preservationan issue that non-whites often view with distrust and perceive as meaning segregation—rather than the old liberal concerns such as social welfare. The decline of the local white population and the rise of Black political activism 'has made the Jewish community even more apprehensive and concerned with protecting its political "power".' Consequently, many Blacks concluded that Jewish criticism of Jackson was actually an attempt to maintain local white ethnic hegemony over the national minority electorate. On New York state's primary day, only five per cent of Jewish voters backed Jackson. 118

By mid-March 1984, the national Black press was dominated by harsh reactions against American Jewish leaders, and criticism was fueled less by the 'Hymie controversy' than by those older, half-hidden grievances. John Kilimanjaro, editor/publisher of the Carolina Peacemaker, stated that the 'Stop Jesse Movement had finally seized on an issue' in order to 'derail the Jackson Presidential Limited in its stride for the Democratic nomination...Far too many Jews are firmly ensconced in reactionary camps and are guilty of passing themselves off as liberals when it suits their purpose. It is these wolves in sheep's clothing who come

¹¹⁵ Harold Cruse, The Cruis of the Negro Intellectual, New York 1967, pp 482-483

¹¹⁶ Stokely Carmichael, Stokely Speaks Black Power Back to Pas-Africanism, New York 1971, p. 206

¹¹⁷ Franklin Williams, 'Jewish Political Support', Australian News, 4 February 1984.

¹³⁸ Arnold Linhardt, 'New York's Jewish Voter. Losing Clout's Jewish Currents Vol. 38, June 1984, pp. 4–6 Jackson's citywide vote promoted immediate speculation that a Black or Hispanic candidate could capture the mayor's office in the 1985 election. See Sam Roberts, 'Black Strength in City Voting', New York Times, 5 April 1984.

down hard on Blacks whenever they dare raise their hand in independentfashion.'119 Black economist Curtis Perkins denounced Jackson's critics as those who had also obtained the firing of Andrew Young from the UN. Young was 'a victim of Zionist power in the US, which is against any overtures to the PLO and to most Arabs.' Now Jackson shared Young's fate. 'We will defy those who try to bully us, dangle their money to tempt us or not allow our views to be heard.' Perkins warned. 120 A controversial statement was issued by Carlton Goodlett. the nation's most influential Afro-American publisher: 'Blacks resent the fact that Jews have taken the Big Brother attitude in most civil rights struggles...When Blacks are only presenting our own point of view on what's best for Black folks, far too many of our lewish friends think of us as anti-Semitic. The hell raised over the small aspersion upon Jews made by Jackson was a smokescreen behind which the anti-Jackson movement among Jews was projected and gained momentum.'121The Jewish response was often in a similar vein. Leonard Fein, editor of the Jewish monthly Moment, retorted: 'Jackson's actions, his evasions and his statements have done grave damage to this nation ... Blacks deserve better leadership than Jesse Jackson offers.'122

The Farrakhan Controversy

Black-Jewish relations then deteriorated to a nadir with the emergence of the Farrakhan controversy'. Leader of the Nation of Islam religious group, which had approximately 5,000 to 10,000 members, Farrakhan maintained a substantial political following which well exceeded his own organization. Farrakhan was a featured speaker at the 1983 March on Washington, and was one of the earliest supporters of Jackson's candidacy. For the Muslim Leader, the campaign illustrated that 'the power and presence of Allah is being felt in the activity of the children of slaves, who, in quest of their own freedom, must make a thrust for the freedom of all others.'123 Fluent in Arabic and a charismatic speaker, Farrakhan was an undeniable asset at first, reaching both the growing community of American Muslims and a large sector of the militant Black nationalist movement which had previously opposed electoral participation.¹²⁴ When Jackson came under attack for the 'Hymie' slur, Farrakhan responded with his own verbal jibes. In a radio broadcast on 11 March, he attacked Milton Coleman as a 'betrayer' to his race for reprinting remarks which had been 'off the record'. Coleman was warned: 'One day soon we will punish you with death.' Farrakhan referred to Adolf Hitler as 'wickedly great', and declared that if Jackson's candidacy was not taken seriously by the Democratic National Convention he would lead an army to Washington, D.C., to 'negotiate

¹¹⁹ John Marshall Kilimanjaro, 'Jesse and that Hymie Slur', Caroline Pascaraher, 17 March 1984

¹³⁰ Curtis Perkins, "The Maligning of Jesse Jackson', Beffab Chelleger, 7 March 1984

¹²¹ Carlton Goodlett, In Defense of Jesse', Buffale Challeger, 14 March 1984

¹²² Fem also condemned Jews 'who regularly refer to "theories" sancumoniously to condemn those who use "Hymie". It is time for us to stop pretending that our history of persecution has immunized us against prejudice 'See Schappes, 'Around the World', p. 45.

125 Chavis, Theology Under the Rambow', p. 8

¹²⁴ In Detroit, Fareikhan introduced Jackson before a crowd of \$,000 Arab-American supporters, speaking in fluent Arabic. See Jim Jacobs and Herb Boyd, Facing the Headwind, *Matra Times*[Detroit], 11–17 January, 1984

for a separate state or territory of our own."125 Jackson immediately disavowed Farrakhan's statements, and defended Coleman as a 'tough' and 'professional reporter'. But he did not repudiate Farrakhan's endorsement of his candidacy, declaring I am not going to negotiate away my integrity trying to impress somebody.'126 Virtually every white American leader was outraged by Jackson's refusal to condemn a 'racial demagogue'. Hundreds of newspaper editorials denounced Jackson again, linking Farrakhan's Black Muslim beliefs with those of the Baptist minister. Two Reagan appointees to the us Civil Rights Commission described Farrakhan as 'a man who preaches hate', and demanded that Jackson disavow his support unconditionally. 127 The us Justice Department promptly investigated Farrakhan's broadcast transcript for evidence to prosecute him for threatening the life of Coleman. 128 In an opportunistic attempt to link Mondale and Hart to the Farrakhan controversy, Vice-president George Bush attacked all three Democratic candidates for failing to 'denounce the intrusion of anti-semitism into the American political process.'129 Quietly Jackson asked Farrakhan not to work publicly for the campaign. But only in June, when Farrakhan was quoted as calling Judaism a 'gutter religion' and the establishment of the Israeli state an 'outlaw act', did Jackson forcefully condemn his statements as 'reprehensible and morally indefensible'. 130 Several weeks later, however, Jackson charged that Mondale had refused to consider him as a possible running mate because 'Jewish leaders' had tried to 'make me a pariah and isolate our support.' Once more, Jewish leaders attacked Jackson. Henry Stegman, the executive director of the American Jewish Congress, warned Democratic party officials that continued support for Jackson was 'a partnership that can only lead to disaster'. 131 What these critics failed to comprehend was that Jackson's 'inspiration and his voter registration campaign now made Blacks indispensable to any Democratic Presiden-

¹²⁵ 'Jackson Disagrees With Secession Idea', New York Times, 13 April 1984, E.R. Shipp, 'Farrakhan Statements Reflect His Background', New York Times, 17 April 1984. Farrakhan's broadcast of 11 March included the following commentary. The Jews don't like Farrakhan, so they call me Hriter. Well, that's a good name. Hriter was a very great man. He wasn't great for me a Black person, but he was a great German. Now I'm not proud of Hitler's evil against Jewish people, but that's a matter of public record. But don't compare me with your wicked killers' See 'Farrakhan on Race, Politics and the News Media', New York Times, 17 April 1984.

¹²⁶ Fay S. Joyce, 'Jackson, Cring "My Integrity", Upholds His Ties to Farrakhan', New York Times,

¹²⁷ Pay S. Joyce, 'Black Muslim Leader's Support', New York Tures, 2 May 1984

^{138 &#}x27;U.S. Calls Evidence Insufficient', New York Timer, 6 May 1984

¹²⁹ David Shribman, 'Bush Faults Democrats as Failing to Deal with Anti-Semitism Issue', New York Times, 10 April 1984. Jackson responded that Bush's remarks 'come from an Administration that supported regimes in Chile and El Salvador', both gross violators of human rights. Bush's plantindes, as such, were at best 'self-righteous'.

¹²⁰ Robert Pear, 'Mondale is Trying to Patch the Jewish-Black Rift', New York Timer, 18 July 1984, Jackson's extensive repodiation of Farrakhan's statements included the following remarks: 'I am a Judseo-Christian and the roots of my faith run deep in the Judseo-Christian tradition. Such statements are inflammatory to the context of the Middle East and are damaging to the prospects for peace there. I will not permit Minister Farrakhan's words, writingly or unwritingly, to divide the Democratic Party, Neither enti-Semitiam nor enti-Black statements have any place in our party' "Text of Statement By Jackson', Buffale Chellenger, 3 July 1984.

¹³⁴ Gerald M. Boyd, 'Jackson Charges Mondale Ignored Him on No. 2 Spot', New York Times, 11 July 1984, and Joseph Berger, 'Jewish Leaders Criticine Jackson, The Democrats Are Also Warned', New York Times, 11 July 1984.

tial victory.'132 The Afro-American social fraction's support for Jackson, and to a lesser extent Farrakhan, was an expression of its organic nationalism, as well as its quest for racial equality.'133

Even after the Democratic campaign ended, tensions between the Afro-American and Jewish national minorities remained. Civil rights leaders attempted to restore working relationships with Jewish groups; Vernon Jordan, a critic of Jewish opposition to racial quotas in employment, still maintained that the Afro-American-Jewish coalition which existed in the 1960s was 'an alliance of necessity'. 134 Certainly, the debate obscured the central reality that both social fractions tended to share the most liberal political views within us bourgeois democracy. Public opinion polls held in late May 1984 indicated that both Afro-Americans and Jews favoured affirmative action without rigid quotas (Blacks 73-19 per cent, Jews 70-20 per cent); the Equal Rights Amendment (Blacks 74-21 per cent, Jews 79-20 per cent); and both favoured a nuclear freeze 'by 9 to 1 or better'. Jews gave Reagan a 61-18 negative assessment to Blacks' 80-18 rating; and both believed that Jackson was 'an attractive, forceful personality and a real leader (Blacks 80-19 per cent, Jews 55-36 per cent).' 135 But a convergence of liberal policy positions and a common history of oppression do not necessarily create the foundations of a viable political alliance. Antisemitism, as a social manifestation of intolerance, cannot be equated directly with the impact of white supremacy, which is not an anti-social but a sub-social dynamic. The actual material conditions of the Afro-American proletariat and the poor, which comprise the majority of Blacks, cannot be equated with the socio-economic conditions of most Jewish Americans. The exploited Black social fraction represents a historically oppressed national minority which is simultaneously seeking effective representation within the bourgeois-democratic state apparatus, and modes of institutional expression of its deep desire for selfdetermination. The struggle is both bourgeois-democratic, a campaign for equality, and an assertion of indigenous suppressed nationalism. But this Afro-American upsurge came precisely at a time when many American Jews were concerned with their own declining birth-rate, loss of cultural identity and political cohesiveness. The barrier of race in effect produced a more race-conscious modern Black movement, while

¹²² Don Beer, 'Dixse Democrats', New York Times, 15 July 1984.

¹³³ After all the acrimony surrounding Minister Farrakhan, the majority of Afro-Americans sull supported him. One indication of this was expressed in a *Las Angeler Travis* public opinion poll of delegates attending the Democratic convention. Among white delegates, 76 per cent expressed an 'unfavourable' opinion of Farrakhan as a leader, three per cent had a 'favourable' opinion, with the remainder giving no opinion. Among Black delegates, 47 per cent had a favourable opinion, while 38 per cent were unfavourable. People', Sacramano Observer, 19–25 July 1984.

¹³⁴ Vemon Jordan, 'An Albance of Necessity', Sacramente Observer, 5-11 July 1984, John Herbers, 'Anni-Seminam Issue Wornes Party', New York Tower, 11 April 1984, Lew Moroze, 'Jewish Americans and the Fight against Reagainsm', Deely World, 16 July 1984, 'B'mai B'rith Cites Farrakhan's Record of Anni-Seminam', Cherlaten Chronick, 23 July 1984, 'Farrakhan Calls Press Laurs', Sacramente Observer, 5-11 July 1984, and Peter Noel, 'Vemon Jordan Attacks Jewish Stand on Quotas', Cherlaten Chronick, 23 June 1984.

¹³⁵ Afro-Americans are not immune to anti-Semitism, unfortunately. Yet Harris's poll also notes this important fact. 'By an overwhelming 77-8 per cent majority, Blacks feel that "The same people who would like to keep down Jews would also like to keep other minorities down." 'Lou Harris, 'Comparative Outlook on Politics and Issues between Black and Jewish Voters', National Scale, Vol. 53, July 1984, pp. 26-27.

the opportunity for assimilation led many Jews to inter-marry with gentiles and even to 'reject or break away from self-identification as a Jew', in the words of educator Abraham Margolies. ¹³⁶ The antipathy of Afro-Americans toward the policies of the state of Israel, and their growing affinity with the suppressed national liberation struggles of the Arab diaspora, only increased their domestic political divergence from American Jews. As the us Black movement acquires greater internal clarity, it will undoubtedly move even further toward the general anti-Zionist position held by world opinion, even in bourgeois democracies. At that point, despite the domestic liberal political tradition of American Jews, a choice will have to be made between their rich heritage of humanitarianism and anti-racism and a general support for the expansionist and repressive policies of the Zionist state. The Jackson campaign only shortened the time in which this choice must be made.

Results of the Campaign

What were the accomplishments of the Rainbow Coalition, and what were its limitations? The candidate attempted to explain his own contradictions, and his aspirations for this social protest within the context of bourgeois democracy, on the morning of 5 June. Addressing a small 'prayer circle' of supporters before the Acorn housing projects in Oakland, California, Jackson was physically drained but seemed at peace with himself. 'There comes a point when leaders can't take you any further,' Jackson stated softly. T've brought you as far as I could bring you. You must shoulder the burden and the responsibility and go across the chilly Jordan. Each one has to swim for his or herself.'137 With these words, some felt a shudder of recognition; Martin Luther King's last major address had expressed the identical sense of completion, the achievement of a new level of Black hope and struggle. 136 In the cold eye of the national media, other criteria were used to measure the full dimensions of this internal revolt against the Democratic Party. Jackson had won over three and a half million popular votes; he defeated Mondale and Hart in sixty Congressional districts; he carried popular majorities or pluralities in the District of Columbia, Viriginia, South Carolina, Louisiana and Mississippi. To be sure, some Afro-Americans had voted for Jackson because he was Black. But the Rainbow Coalition found its popular base because of its advanced

¹³⁶ Since 1920, the overall percentage of Jews in the US population has declined from 3.7 per cent to 2.7 per cent Among the third and fourth generations of American Jews, the rate of internarriage increased from 5.9 per cent in 1955–1960 to 31.7 per cent in 1966–1972. Elihi Bergman, assistant director of Harvard University's Center for Population Studies, estimates that the US Bevish community could be as small as 944,000 in 90 years, while the US Black population is projected to exceed 32.8 million by 2000. See Abraham Margolies, 'American Jewry's Survival Outlook. The Demographic Picture', Jamis Carranti, Vol. 38, January 1984, pp. 4–9, and 'Estimates and Projections of the Population by Ago. 1970 to 2000', in Bureau of the Census, The Social and Economic States of the Black Population in the United States, p. 18.

¹³⁷ Gerald M. Boyd, 'Reporter's Notebook. Jackson's Brand of Politics', New York Times, 15 June 1982.

¹⁵⁸ The night before his sisusumation, King stated: I don't know what will happen now. But it really doesn't matter to me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land,' See Maming Marable, 'Evaluating King's Journey', Deswerstix Laft, Vol. 11, September-October 1983, p. 15.

political programme, not because of the racial identity of its spokesperson. As Barry Commoner observed, Jackson came to be the voice of the mass post-war constituencies 'for civil rights; against nuclear weapons testing; for women's and gay rights; against the war in Vietnam; for the environment; against nuclear power and for solar energy; against nuclear war. Each of these movements expresses a moral critique of a major national policy. Taken together they represent millions of voters, yet they have never been linked together into a political force.'139

The biggest impact of the Jackson effort occurred in the South. The region had fewer than 3,000 Black elected officials out of a total of 79,000 (3.8 per cent), despite a 21 per cent Black regionwide population in 1984. Southern Blacks had only one Congressional representative, but seven mayors of cities with a population of 50,000 or more. With the Jackson mobilization, thousands of non-registered Blacks were motivated to participate in the electoral process. Between January 1983 and April 1984, over 183,000 new Black voters were enrolled in just five Southern states—Georgia, South and North Carolina, Alabama, and Louisiana. The significance of this mobilization was not lost upon many traditional political bosses. In 1980, for example, there were 85,000 unregistered Black voters in Arkansas, a state Reagan carried in the general election by 5,123 votes. In Tennessee, Reagan's 1980 victory margin of 4,710 votes was dwarfed by the 158,000 non-registered Black voters; in South Carolina, Reagan's margin of 11,456 votes disintegrated with any significant registration of the state's 292,000 non-registered Blacks. 140 In Louisiana, white leaders attempted to undermine both the Jackson campaign and Black registration efforts by cancelling the state's 1984 Democratic primary. Conservative Democratic governor Edwin W. Edwards urged voters to 'boycott' the election, and the State Legislature refused to approve a budget request of \$15,000 to pay for printing the ballots. The federal courts required that the election be held, and the worst fears of local racists came true: Jackson received 42 per cent of the statewide vote, trouncing both Mondale and Hart, and in the process brought tens of thousands of new Black voters to the polls. In Tennessee, Jackson was the winner in Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga and Knoxville, the state's four largest cities. 141 In Kentucky, the massive Black turnout for Democratic caucuses stunned party regulars. Statewide, 24 per cent of the caucus participants were Jackson supporters. Jackson carried 51 per cent of the caucus vote in Louisville, the largest metropolitan area with a 15 per cent Black electorate. Lexington, with a 13 per cent Afro-American population, produced a 53 per cent majority for the Rainbow Coalition. 142 In Georgia, the Jackson state chair, State Representative Tyrone Brooks observed: 'We had no paid staff and not one radio or TV ad; we didn't get a cent from the Washington office until March. But we had 500

¹³⁹ Commoner, 'Jackson's Historic Campaign'

¹⁴⁰ Conyers, 'Wny We Should Work for Jesse Jackson', and Elise Davis, 'Campaign 1984 Blacks, Poor Could Decide Election', Seathern Naghberheeds, Vol. 8 May-June 1984, pp 1, 7

¹⁴¹ Phil Guley, 'Louisiana Voter Apathy Seen as Aiding Jackson', Nav York Times, 5 May 1984

¹⁴ Anne Braden, 'Kentucky', NCIPA Navibiter, Vol. 1, June-July 1984, pp. 7-8

volunteers in and out of the Atlanta office every day. And we raised \$300,000 for the national campaign.'143

One central political demand raised throughout the Jackson campaign was abolition of the 'runoff primaries'—which force the two top vote recipients in a Democratic primary to hold a second election if no one obtains to per cent of the vote. In theory, the second primary system ensured that the strongest possible candidate would emerge for the Democratic Party. But in practice, given the extreme reluctance of most whites to vote for Black candidates, it usually eliminated Blacks before they reached general elections. Not coincidentally, the only states which still maintain runoff primaries are in the South. Many Southern politicians of both races, including Bond, insisted that 'the second primary has helped progressive causes as often as it has hurt.' Georgia Lieutenant Governor Zell Miller, a white liberal Democrat, stated that 'without the runoff primary, you would polarize the state along racial lines.'144 Most observers suggested that the abolition of the runoff primaries would increase Afro-American Congressional representation significantly, but several million white Southern Democrats would shift their political allegiance to the Republican Party, thus assuring conservative hegemony at the national level. At the San Francisco convention, however, the Jackson platform plank against runoff primaries was overwhelmingly defeated by the delegates.

Foreign Policy Issues

The most surprising contribution of the Rainbow campaign was its impact upon foreign policy debates. In a racist social formation, Blacks are not expected to possess the capacity to comprehend, much less articulate, sensitive positions on international affairs. Perhaps the most serious charge levelled against the organizers of the 1983 March had been their commitment to address foreign affairs questions, linking domestic social transformation with the battle for world peace and nuclear arms reductions. In the tradition of Robeson and Du Bois, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., Jackson refused to parochialize the broader meaning of the Black freedom movement. As the campaign progressed, Jackson moved further to the left. For example, at the 12 November [1983] march on Washington in support of Central America, Jackson was ambiguous about the presence of us troops in Lebanon and called for Europe and Japan to build up their military forces to take the place of cuts in the us military budget', Marxist journalist John Trinkl noted. Within five months, progressive campaign staff and researchers sharply influenced Jackson's international positions. During the New York Primary, Jackson's condemnation of bipartisan foreign policies was as radical as that of any socialist. On Central America, Jackson declared, 'our government [is] on the wrong side of history, taking the side of dictators against the people. We must reexamine our foreign policy of history around the world, we must seek

^{143 &}quot;The Jackson Campaign in the South'.

¹⁴⁴ Julian Bond, "Testing the "Litmus Test" ', Survivante Observer, 31 May-6 June, 1984, and Phil Gailey, 'Runoff Issue Puts Democrats on Spot', New York Tures, 3 May 1984

to wage peace, to take the side of oppressed people.' 145 Speaking before the North American Regional Conference For Action Against Apartheid in New York, Jackson called for federal legislation prohibiting new us corporate investment in South Africa, and 'a timetable for the removal of the more than 350 American corporations doing business there.' Denouncing us foreign policy as a tool of corporate capitalism, Jackson thundered: 'Choosing dollars over dignity not only in South Africa, but in El Salvador, Chile, the Philippines and elsewhere around the world is leading us as a nation down the road to moral suicide.'146 In late July, Jackson met with the leaders of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, and travelled to Cuba, where he obtained the release of 48 American and Cuban prisoners. Even before Jackson returned to the US, Secretary of State George Shultz denounced the release as a Cuban 'propaganda ploy', and the Supreme Court reinstated the Reagan Administration's strict curbs on visiting Cuba. The New York Times viciously attacked Jackson's 'burgeoning traffic in prisoners from dictatorships' as a 'collaboration with the enemies of democracy'.147 Perhaps the Times, the voice of bourgeois democracy, was most distressed with the conclusion of Jackson's speech at the University of Havana: 'Viva el Presidente Fidel Castro! Viva Martin Luther King! Viva Ché Guevaral Viva Patrice Lumumbal Dios les bendigal'148

The Convention

At the Democratic convention during the week of 16 July, the Rainbow Coalition continued to mobilize. As most of the Mondale and Hart delegates sat in the Moscone Convention Center on the night of 16 July, Jackson, Dellums and thousands of dissidents held their own rally outside in the centre's parking lot. In the streets, several hundred thousand Jackson supporters, workers, gay and lesbian activists, peace proponents and other radical reformers continued to demonstrate throughout the week.¹⁴⁹ The Rainbow forces inside the convention

¹⁴⁶ John Trinkl, 'Millsons for the People, Not Another Cent for War', Guersker, 11 April 1984, Gerski M Boyd, 'Jackson Describes the Resign Administration as "Warmongering"," New York Times, 26 April 1984

¹⁴⁶ Norman Richmond, 'Jackson Attacks Reagan's Policies at UN', Buffale Challenger, 11 July 1984.
Other participants at the anti-apartheid conference included US Communist leader Angela Davis, Andrew Young, and San Nujoma, leader of the South West Africa People's Organization

¹⁴⁷ Gerald M. Boyd, 'Jackson Flies to Cuba to Pick Up Prisoners and Take Them to the U S', Bernard Gwettman, 'Cuba Move Called Propagands Ploy'; and Linda Greenhouse, 'High Court Restores Curba on Tourist Travel to Cuba', New York Times, 29 June 1984, Editorial, 'Mir Jackson's Prisoner Dealings', and Gerald M. Boyd, 'Jackson Says Attack by Reagan Cloaks Failures in Foreign Policy', New York Times, 6 July 1984; and Karen Wald, 'Jackson the Peacemaker', Generalise, 11 July 1984, ¹⁴⁸ Text of Jackson's speech at the University of Havana, 27 June 1984, Copy provided to author by the Cuban Mission, Unitteed Nations, New York The near-unanimous opinion of Afro-Americans on Jackson's Cuba trip was very positive. One Jackson backer, South Carolina State Representative Robert R. Woods, was particularly miffed at the white media's negative reaction. Woods exclaimed, white American leaders were 'suddenly up in arms' because they had been 'forced to watch from the sidelines as a real leader takes over and shows the world how things are done?' 'Lawmaker Sees Jesse's Cuban Trek as a "Chimitan Success", White Media Reaction No Surprise', Cheritates Christole, 7 July 1984.

¹⁹ Tim Wheeler, 'Dems Join Thousands in Peace Raily', Deely World, 18 July 1984, and Kevin J Kelley and Joyce Stoller, 'Activism and Affirmation', Georgies, 23 July 1984. Most US newspapers wrote virtually nothing about the senes of mass demonstrations held by the liberal-left in San Francisco On 13 July, Jackson apoke before a Rambow raily of four thousand in San Francisco's

placed before the delegates several minority platform positions, including 'no first use' of nuclear weapons, support for affirmative action programmes without the use of strict quotas, and a demand for 'substantial reductions' in Pentagon spending. Mondale was opposed to all of these positions, but was unable to impose discipline on his Afro-American delegates. The Black Caucus of the Democratic National Committee, chaired by Mondale-supporter Mickey Leland, voted to support all of Jackson's progressive minority planks to the Democratic platform. Well over 90 per cent of the 968 Black delegates voted with lackson's positions. But despite the defection of several hundred Latino and liberal white delegates to the Rainbow Coalition, Mondale and Hart delegates voted according to the demands of the prospective nominee. The plank for major reductions in the military budget was defeated by over a two-to-one margin. A compromise plank was approved on affirmative action, but many Jackson delegates stated anguly that 'the approved version was weakened to the point of becoming meaningless.' The Jackson minority plank to put the party 'on record as unconditionally opposed to any first use of nuclear weapons' also lost, but obtained the support of 1,406 delegates, or 39 per cent of all voting on the issue. 150 The plank calling for elimination of the South's runoff primaries was crushed by a three-to-one margin. During the floor debate, Black delegates were stunned to see Andrew Young waltz to the platform to support the dual elections. Throughout his ten-minute speech, Afro-American delegates 'booed and heckled' from the convention floor. The general view of most Blacks was that Mondale had despicably used Andy to leave the Black community high and dry. Coretta Scott King subsequently chastized Black delegates who had 'wronged' Youngand she too was promptly booed. Only Jackson's timely intervention kept some degree of order. Embracing Young, he reprimanded the hecklers that their conduct was 'rude and unnecessary'. 151 But Jackson also recognized the frustration of his followers. One Jackson delegate, Pennsylvania State Representative Dave Richardson, explained: 'We have to have something to take back to our people to save face.'152

Fresh from the defeat of the Rainbow Coalition's platform planks, Jackson could have vented his anger before a national audience. but his major televised address was a masterful performance. 'The network cameras made the whole nation a cathedral for an experience previously common only on Sundays, in the Black churches of America', wrote one reporter. Filling the 'moral and political vacuum at the centre of Black America' once occupied by King, Jackson came 'as a man who would not be denied, creating an opportunity no Black man had had before.' Apologizing to American Jews, he stated: 'If in my low

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Union Square, the 'National March for Lesban/Gay Rights' brought 100,000 into the street on 15 July, on 16 July, over 100,000 activists marched to Moscone Center in a 'Vote Peace in '84' rally, and on 14 July over 4,000 older people railied to denounce the Reagan Administration's attacks on Social Security

¹⁸⁰ John Wojcik, 'Black Delegates call for Dem Party Unity', Desty World, 17 July 1984, Warren Weaver, Jr., 'Jackson Plank on Weapons is Voted Down by Delegates', New York Timer, 18 July 1984, ¹⁸¹ 'Andrew Young Booed His Stance on Dual Primaries Irks Many Blacks', and Regina Evans, 'Dual Primary Attacked', Secretaria Observer, 19–21 July 1984.

 ¹²² Tony Brown, 'Is Young For Jackson's Strategy or Not's Carolina Procumatur, 28 July 1984
 123 Dudley Clendinen, 'Nation Is a Cathedral With Jackson at Pulpit', Nav York Timer, 19 July 1984

moments, in word, deed or attitude, through some error of temper, taste or tone, I have caused anyone discomfort, created pain or revived someone's fears, that was not my truest self.' Jews and Blacks were bound by shared blood and shared sacrifices'. 154 Jackson then offered a moral critique of the Reagan Administration, noting that it 'must be held accountable for increasing infant mortality among the poor.' He evoked hilarious cheers when he stated: I would rather have Roosevelt in a wheelchair than Reagan on a horsel' He placated Mondale delegates by announcing that he would be 'proud to support the nominee of this convention', but he refused to repudiate any of the progressive positions he had advocated in the previous six months. And in a break with his own previous history, he reminded his supporters: I am not a perfect servant. I am a public servant. As I develop and serve, be patient. God is not finished with me yet.' Jackson's speech, which was rumoured to have been drafted in part with the assistance of Senator Kennedy's speechwriters, received nearly total acclaim. Some white Mondale delegates even admitted that 'if Jesse Jackson were a white man, he would win the presidency hands down.' The Black press praised Jackson's speech as 'the rhetorical highlight of the convention', 155 while moderate Black elected officials such as Congresswoman Cardiss Collins termed it a 'watershed for democratic politics'. 156 John Jacob expressed the hope that Mondale, now safely nominated, would 'understand that Jesse Jackson is critical to getting out the Black vote.' But Black Marxists, Black nationalists, and more progressive reformers shared a radically different view of the entire proceedings. Joseph Lowery complained that 'even after all that Jesse did to show what Black voters can do, it's the same old thing.' Amiri Baraka demanded, 'Why are we going home with nothing?' Herbert Daughtry was 'disappointed and disgusted' with the entire process. Taking Jackson aside, he urged the minister to hand Mondale an ultimatum: 'You respond to our demands, or you get your backside whipped by Reagan. 157

A Black Moses

The hopes of Daughtry and other progressive Blacks were quickly dashed. Despite the massive Jackson social movement which had nearly denied Mondale the nomination, the cautious Cold War liberal had learned nothing new. Mondale's staff had prepared a 250-page study in the weeks immediately preceding the Democratic convention, which assessed his chances in the general election. The study concluded that 'the only way Mondale can win is by pitching his appeal to the white working class and minorities, not the middle class.' With the registration of an additional six million Latino, Black, poor, and blue-collar voters, he could defeat Reagan. To secure a large minority turnout, a Black politician had to be selected as his vice-presidential running mate.

¹⁵⁴ William G. Blair, 'Jewish Leaders Hail Jackson Unity Plea but Voice Caution', Naw York Timu, 19 July 1984

Clendinen, 'Nisnon Is a Cathedral With Jackson at Pulpit', Kevin J. Kelley, 'Jackson is Dems' Conscience Despite Compromises', Generalise, 25 July 1984, Editorial, 'If Jesse Were White' Caroline Procuration, 28 July 1984, 'Rev. Jackson's Speech to Remember', Sacramore Observer, 19–25 July 1984
 Joe Dear, 'It's Mondale: Black Delegates Still Unessy About Pull Support', Sacramore Observer, 19–25 July 1984

¹⁵⁷ Akinshiya C. Ola, 'New Dawn Coming for the Rambow Coalition?' Georgies, 8 August 1984

Mondale's response was to select a three-term, Italian-American Congresswoman; Geraldine Ferraro. Despite her working-class origins, Ferraro had little in common with most white. Black or Latin women. Ferraro's husband was a millionaire real-estate operator in New York City. Politically liberal on some economic issues, she had also voted against school desegregation busing, and supported the Pershing II missile programme and the Trident nuclear submarine; which took billions of dollars from human service programmes needed by working women. Of all white female Democratic leaders, she was the one whom 'the men in the back room find most acceptable.' 158 Chosen several days before the convention began, Ferraro was the first woman selected by a major capitalist party as a national candidate. Jackson quickly praised Ferraro's selection as 'long' overdue and well deserved. But Jackson had been the first Democratic candidate in history to promise during the campaign that he would select a woman running mate if nominated. Campaign aides noted that Mondale 'never took seriously' a list of minority women vice-presidential possibilities which Jackson had given him two weeks before the convention. Many Afro-American women and Latinas argued that other minority women leaders were far better qualified than Ferraro. 159 The alienation of the Rainbow forces with Mondale further increased when the party nominee froze many Jackson supporters out of campaign roles, and appointed Rangel as his national campaign co-chair. By late July, Jackson was forced to anounce that he would campaign for the Democratic ticket only when Mondale and Ferraro sent a 'message to inspire the masses'. That message was not forthcoming. 160

The polarization continued to develop between Black reformers and radicals and the Mondale moderates. Afro-American women leaders angered at Ferraro's selection promptly announced plans to form a non-partisan political group, the National Black Women's Political Caucus, which would 'groom, endorse and support candidates'. ¹⁶¹ Frank Watkins, a top Jackson aide, revealed plans to create a permanent Rainbow Coalition, with its national headquarters at the Operation PUSH centre in Chicago. 'The centre would be equipped with television studios, a direct-mail organization and offices for voter registration and fundraising.' Jackson perceived this as a 'viable political organization' independent of Democratic Party control, which was an 'overt political arm of our struggle' for racial equality, peace, and economic rights.

¹³⁸ Jane Perlex, 'Liberal Democrat From Queens', Bernard Weinraub, 'Geraldine Ferraro is Chosen as Running Mate', and Howell Rames, 'Mondale Decision. Prane Ignores Risks', New York Times, 13 July 1944, Kevin J Kelley, 'Dems Move Toward Middle, But Miss the Masses', Geordine, 8 August 1944; Kevin J Kelley, 'Ferraro's Platform' Family, Fairness and Gender Gap', Geordine, 25 July 1984, 199 Ronald Smothers, 'Jackson Applauds Mondale on "Closing the Gender Gap'", New York Times, 13 July 1984, Barbara Banks, Editorial, 'Mondale, Ferraro and Jackson', Buffale Challeger, 18 July 1984, and Kelley, 'Jackson is Dems' conscience Despite Compromise'. The central irony of Ferraro's selection was that it probably would not have occurred had Jackson decided not to run for president in 1984, Black lieutenents of Jackson were bitter about this. As writer Charles G Adams noted, 'Time and again we have seen white women step shead of Blacks to receive that for which Blacks led the fight Without [Jackson's] campaign Geraldine Ferraro's secendancy would have been unthinkable and impossible.' Adams, 'The Black Response to Ferraro's secendancy would have been unthinkable and impossible.' Adams, 'The Black Response to Ferraro's secendancy would have been unthinkable and

¹⁰⁰ Oia, 'New Dawn Coming for the Rambow Coalition?', Bernard Weimanb, 'Wider Role is Seen for Women and Blacks in Mondale Drive', New York Trans, 27 July 1984.

¹⁶⁸ Black Women Forming Coalition for Recognition', New York Times, 7 August 1984

Many local and state campaign leaders of the Rainbow coalition also believed that the social forces brought together could be forged into a permanent national left-liberal bloc. 162 Viewed from the vantage of Black social history, however, there remained a potential flaw in the entire mobilization. Repeatedly within Afro-American political culture a 'Black Messiah' or 'Black Moses' has arisen, challenging the system of institutional racism, motivating thousands of Blacks to march, and inspiring a new vision of social relations. The political discourse is almost always connected with the Old Testament saga of Moses. For Afro-Americans during the Civil War, Jewish biblical history was merged with their intense commitment to achieve freedom. Slave songs spoke of the 'rough, rocky road' that Moses travelled. As historian Eugene D. Genovese notes, 'the image of Moses, the this-worldly leader of his people out of bondage' was central to the politics of 'deliverance'. 163 After World War One, Marcus Garvey created one of the largest Afro-American organizations in history, the unia, and was seen by his contemporaries as a 'Black Moses' who had precipitated 'a new era of militant Black leadership'. 164 Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, A. Philip Randolph, and now Jesse Jackson are seen within this Black redemptive tradition, the synthesis of spiritual salvation and temporal transformation. The weaknesses of this perspective are obvious, at least in the case of Jackson. The intense socio-economic crisis of the 1980s within Black America created the social foundations for a Black revolt against the Democratic Party; but given the lack of a socialist alternative, that revolt occurred within the Democratic Party. Jackson, long the representative of the Black entrepreneurial elite, became the conduit of the Black social revolt. History forced greatness upon Jackson. This new 'Black Moses' accepted it, and surprisingly rose to the occasion, despite frequent detours.

In summary, the Jackson campaign of 1984 represented a concerted struggle of Black workers, the poor and a fraction of the petty bourgeoisie to assert political power within the bourgeois democratic process. The specific goal was not to secure for Jackson his party's presidential nomination, but rather to expand the democratic principles and rules by which the selection of such candidates occurs. The mobilization involved various modes of political and cultural resistance, from religious organizing to trade union activities. As such, it expressed a 'national' character, the subdued yet strong consciousness of Afro-Americans as a national minority or 'nation' within a nation: that we, as Black people, have a right to assert ourselves collectively to advance our own interests, to determine our own destines. The major question here is whether the Democratic Party, as a capitalist political formation, can become an appropriate social vehicle to transform the larger social

¹⁶² Lawrence A. Sull, 'Democrata, Calls "Rambow" Convention', Charleston Chronols, 23 June 1984, 'Operation PUBH Convenes', Sucrements Observer, 14-20 June 1984; and Ola, 'New Dawn Coming for the Rambow Coalition?

¹⁶⁵ Genovese, Rall, Jordan, Rall, pp 252–253, and Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness, pp 50–51

¹⁴⁴ Hill, ed., The Marcus Garrey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Volume I, pp. xxxviii—xxxiix. Also see Claude McKay, 'Garvey as a Negro Moses', The Laborator, April 1922, pp. 8–9, and Truman Hughes Talley, 'Marcus Garvey: The Negro Moses' World's Work, Vol. 41, December 1920, pp. 153–166

formation, and to create the political environment in which racism can be destroyed. The Jackson campaign represented a search for both a social/political mechanism and a strategy under the conditions of racist, advanced capitalism to alter the material conditions of oppressed classes. Does the Afro-American reformist petty bourgeoisie, which led this campaign, have the theoretical perspective and the political commitment to move to the next logical stage of struggle? Unless pressured from below, the answer is negative. Thus another political mechanism must be constructed in the US, among the most class-conscious, progressive elements of the Rainbow Coalition, which will raise the central political contradictions of class/race/gender at every instance in the process of the expanding social movement. If such a social mechanism or cadre formation is built, the pressure from below will continue to force the liberal and reform-minded petty bourgeois to the left, and may in the near future create a political division within the Democratic Party, permitting a true social-democratic or labour party with a mass constituency finally to emerge on the US political scene. Jackson's role in this process is vital. Whether he is capable of expanding his own social vision to include the fundamental restructuring of the US political economy, which is the only means to destroy racism and class inequality, cannot be determined at present. But the Afro-American working class and the poor, through their own political mobilization and protests, will determine the historical circumstances and conditions for the next phase of the Rainbow Rebellion.

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Reaganomics' Magical Mystery Tour

The re-election of Ronald Reagan will unleash new debate on the causes of the continuing conservative ascendancy in North America and Western Europe. Following in the well-worn grooves of discussions in 1980–1, some will stress the renewed importance of a reactionary-populist social discourse centred on 'right to life', family traditionalism and religious obscurantism. Others, particularly sensitive to its impact on the vulnerable minds of the video-game generation, will emphasize the hallucinatory euphoria of the patriotic revival enacted in the Los Angeles Coliseum and on a small Caribbean island. Still others—conscious that the media remain, more than ever, their own message—will place greatest weight on the Hollywoodization of the presidency abetted by a sycophantic news establishment. Each of these optics focuses on an important set of factors. Yet, squatting awkwardly astride all refinements in the analysis of political discourse, is the simple, massive fact of the Reagan 'boom' and its mobilization of economic self-interest. All the major pre-election polls, as well as the network 'exit' polls

on 6 November, revealed the paramount importance of the 'comfort/ discomfort' index of family economic position in orienting voter affinity. Some 60% of voters who thought the economy was better off than in 1980 landslided to Reagan by a margin of six to one, while, conversely, the 40% who thought the economy, or themselves, worse off swung to Mondale by four to one. The overriding role of the prosperity issue—especially in an election where the Democratic candidate so successfully obfuscated the war-and-peace dimension—was demonstrated by the fact that over a fifth of Reagan voters indicated that they had 'strong disagreements' with the incumbent over foreignpolicy or social issues, but gambled on his continued management of the recovery.1 There remains vulgar irony in the fact that it was Reagan's lusty embrace of that false god of the Democrats-John Maynard Keynes—that guaranteed his re-election, while Mondale and the AFL-CIO once again looked like Republicans in their conservative insistence on fiscal probity and restrained growth.2

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But the boom did more than re-elect the prophet, it also confirmed his prophecy. The zealots of Reaganomics—from the original supply-side apostles like Jack Kemp and Paul Craig Roberts to the newer, 'high-tech' conservatives led by Rep. Newt Gingrich (Georgia)—are busy scouring the GOP of disbelievers and deflationists. In spring 1984 the White House officially projected a staggering, 28-quarter-long expansion with cumulative 38% GNP growth and diminishing deficits through the end of fiscal 1989. Embarrassed that Reagan had, so to speak, stolen their underwear, rueful traditional Keynesians like Walter Heller could only rationalize that the 'supply-side piano' was playing 'pure demand-side music'.'

Meanwhile, Reaganomics suddenly made enthusiastic conversions in heather Europe, where, as Business Week gloated at the end of the summer, the French were now in 'awe' and erstwhile left-wing papers asked 'could Reagan be right?'*. Nowhere, of course, was the upswing welcomed with such sheer ideological ecstasy as in Tory Britain, although carefully filtered through a Thatcherite mind-set that censored the contribution of federal deficits in order to emphasize the wonders of America's de-unionizing labour markets. (At the October Tory conference an ovation was given when a speaker evoked the inspiring example of New York's entrepreneurial poor operating elevators and performing other servile duties for a dignified pittance.)

However, this adventitious economic upturn, which renewed the domestic mandate of the New Right, provided international cohesion to cold war military escalation and, far more than expected, accelerated the breakup of welfarist political coalitions, is now tottering into its third year, with warning signs of flagging demand and falling profits.

¹ CBS/New York Times Bast Poll, 6 November 1984

² The New York Times (henceforth, MTs) characterized Moodale's economics as 'bluntly conservative . . no major jobs programmes, no smalle anti-poverty measures, and no substantive housing and welfare measures.' 11 September 1984, p. Az4.

³ Walter Heller, 'President Reagan is a Keyncaran Now', The Wall Street Journal (henceforth, wsj), 24 March 1983

⁴ See Banmerr Wook (BW), 24 September 1984

As the historically high rates of real interest attest, business confidence has been made qualitatively more precarious and volatile by the experiences of the 1974-5 and 1980-2 recessions: any faltering in the self-proclaimed expansion threatens to trigger financial panic, the fall of the 'super-dollar', compensatory increases in interest rates, and a likely collapse of the global debt pyramid. At the same time, the Reaganites are well aware that the long-heralded 'partisan realignment' in their direction strictly depends upon the maintenance of a prosperity encompassing, at least, the suburban middle strata and the sunbelt speculators. For all these reasons, it is obvious that the second Reagan administration will go to extraordinary and dangerous lengths to sustain the current expansion and to prevent a precipitate unraveling of its triumphant electoral bloc.

To understand how a new crisis phase may emerge, and what its political consequences might be, it is first necessary to consider how the Reagan boom has been reshaping the domestic and world-market structures of capitalism. In contrast to Ernest Mandel, who has recently argued that debt-fed growth is only restraining a 'true' restructuration of the world economy and prolonging the basic tendencies of American decline,⁵ I will attempt to show how the upturn has dramatically speeded up the transformation of American hegemony away from a 'Fordist' or mass-accumulation pattern. Three trends in the current expansion have a particular theoretical interest and salience. First, the general shift that is occurring in the profit-distribution process towards interest incomes, with the resultant strengthening of a neo-rentier bloc reminiscent of the speculative capitalism of the 1920s. Secondly, the striking reorientation of mainline us industrial corporations away from consumer-durable mass markets and towards volatile high-profit sectors like military production and financial services a trend which is reinforced by the recent merger mania. Thirdly, the virtually systematic dislocation of dominant trade relationships and capital-flows as the locus of accumulation in new technologies has been displaced from Atlantic to Pacific circuits of capital.

I. USA: a Pathological Prosperity

The 1983-4 recovery has been trumpeted as a break from 'the yoke of the 1970s' and a return to the growth levels of the 1960s. Indeed, the White House has long defended Reaganomics by alluding to the supposed role of the Kennedy/Johnson tax cuts in stimulating the 1960s boom. But the New Frontier's fiscal stimulus was minuscule in comparison with Reagan's 1981 tax revolution: even with the 1982 and 1984 tax increases, the Reagan cuts represent a fourfold larger percentage of the GNP.6 Moreover, although the Kennedy/Johnson tax programme was certainly regressive, it pales beside the upward income distribution effected by Reagan. The widely publicized evaluation of the Reagan record by the middle-of-the-road Urban Institute reveals the following shifts:7

New introduction to La Crim, 1974-1984, Paris 1984

⁴ Allen Sinai, chief economist at Shearson Lehman, quoted in HTT, 18 September 1984, p. D6

⁷ Urban Institute figures cited in Challege, September-October 1984, p. 14

Table 1
After-Tax Income Changes, per quintile ('average family incomes')

(1) dollars	I	П	Ш	IV	V
1980	6913	13,391	18,857	24,886	37,618
1984	6391	13,163	18,034	25,724	40,880
diff.	− 7.6%	— 1.7 %	-4.4%	+3.4%	+8.7%
(2) % of GNP					
1980	6.8	13.2	18.5	24.5	37.0
1984	6.1	12.5	18.1	24.5	38.9

According to the Congressional Budget Office, low-income families have so far lost at least \$23 billion in income and federal benefits, while high-income families have gained more than \$35 billion.8 (Expressed another way: 20.2 million poor households—earning under \$10,000 lost an average of \$400 each in benefit cuts, while 1.4 million wealthy families—\$80,000+—received an average of \$8,400 in tax cuts.9) Moreover, these figures only refer to fiscal transfer effects and budget cuts: if the differential rates of change in market income under Reagan are factored in, the increased share of the top quintile would be even greater. As collectively bargained wages were increasing at less than 3% per annum, a leading firm of management consultants—Towers, Perrin, Forster and Crosby—was reporting that the average salary of corporate CEOs had skyrocketed 40% since 1980, from \$552,000 to \$775,000.10 Similarly, David Gordon discovered that the share of management in the national income had increased from 16.5% in 1979 to 21-00st 20% in 1983.11

Furthermore, these redistributive effects of Reaganomics must be considered in combination with shifts in the sizes of different income groups. According to one study utilized by the AFL-CIO, 55% of the American population fell between the boundaries of \$17,000 and \$41,000 (in 1983 dollars) in 1978. By 1983 only 42% of the population remained within these middle-income parameters. One-quarter of the missing 13% moved upwards to increase the ranks of the affluent, but three-quarters fell downwards into the limbo of the working poor. 12 This trend is another index of the change, which I have discussed in a previous article, towards an 'overconsumptionist' model of accumulation based on the tendential substitution of upper-middle-strata for working-class consumption in the regulation of the economy. 13 A related phenomenon is the dominant place of top-range products in the current pattern of consumer-durable sales—witness the highly profitable demand for luxury and big cars that has led Detroit's recovery.

Normally it would be assumed that a relative decline in the leading role of wage-goods in the recovery—to the benefit of a notional 'department

^{*} Ibed, p x

⁹ Ibid, p 28

in International Herald Trabane, 10 October 1984, p. 1

¹¹ Creed in MYT, 11 July 1984, p. A25

²² AFL-CIO, Demonstratespation and the Two-Tiered Secury, Weshington 1984, reviewed in Labor Notes, Detroit, 22 March 1984

^{13 &}quot;The Political Economy of Late-Imperial America", MLR 143 (January-February 1984)

three' of luxury and military production—would rapidly fuel inflation. Superficially, the most unusual aspect of the present upswing is the supposedly incompatible coexistence of large deficits with dampened inflation. This is the highly precarious result of the artificially low domestic price-level created by the 50% trade-weighted appreciation of the dollar against other OECD currencies since 1980 and a flood of ensuing cheap imports. The maintenance of the 'super-dollar', sustained by unprecedented real interest rates of 8% or more, has allowed the Administration to internationalize the financing of its \$500 billion in cumulative new debt. The Bank of International Settlements estimates that over one-third of the aggregate us credit demand (government plus private sector) is now supplied by foreign capital inflow.¹⁴

For the first time since 1914 the foreign liabilities of the United States exceed its assets (app. \$800 billion), and if present trends were to continue, it would become by 1990 a net debtor to the extent of an unbelievable 16% of GNP.15 But the United States is scarcely a debtor nation in the same sense as Brazil or Mexico. Wall Street money-centre banks and the us Treasury remain sufficiently hegemonic to enforce interest-tribute from the Third World and an unwonted 'Marshall Plan in reverse' from Europe and Japan. Particularly important in the current expansion has been the ability of the rapidly deregulating American financial system to bring onshore eurodollar deposits formerly held in Europe or on island money-havens. The rise of money-market funds, and the removal of ceilings on interest rates, have blurred the distinction between savings and speculation, and enhanced the global role of the dollar. New York's claim to have eclipsed London as the world's banking capital is based on its success in attracting the kind of international liquidity that formerly sheltered in Curação or Grand Cayman, 16

Financial deregulation, through dismantling many of the New Deal structures which subordinated money-capital to productive-capital (interest-rate ceilings, clear separation of commercial and investment banking, and so forth), has also stimulated the formation of a nonvener rentier class. Between 1979 and 1983 grass interest increased from 26% of GNP to 34%—a growth rate twice that of other income categories. The percentage of personal income derived from interest has similarly doubled in the last five years, rising 24% in the first year of the Reagan presidency alone. Since the December 1982 changes which allowed banks to offer market rates on deposit accounts, a broader middle-class segment has been able to take advantage of higher interest rates. Similarly, affluent investors have been attracted to lucrative 12% Treasury bonds: a \$20,000 three-month 'TB', reinvested quarterly for a year, earned interest in 1975 equivalent to an average wage for seven

¹⁴ Max Wilkinson, 'Mannuning Balance on a Narrow Gauge', Financial Times (F1), 17 September 1984, 'World Economy Survey', pp. 1–II

¹³ In 1967, at the height if its outward investments surge, the United States was a net creditor to the tune of 9% of out Financial Times, 8 November 1984, p. 19

¹⁶ See special section on New York City, 3W, 23 July 1984

¹⁷ aw, 1 October 1984, p. 9

²⁸ Council of Economic Advisors, Economic Indicators, September 1984

weeks; today it equals three months of a wage-earner's income.¹⁹ Indeed, as skyrocketing interest on the federal debt (\$1.5 trillion principal) drives up Federal outlays faster than Stockman can find ways to cut school lunches or reduce welfare payments, the net effect is simply to shift government expenditure from the class of the poor to the class of debt-holders. Thus in April of 1984, interest surpassed transfer payments, for the first time since the New Deal, as the third largest income category.²⁰

In a slightly more collectivist fashion, the current role of institutional investors (pension funds, trust departments, mutual funds) demonstrates the extent to which an autonomous rentier interest has gained high ground within the economy. With \$1 trillion in investments, the institutions have almost displaced private individuals in the equity markets, engaging in 80–90% of daily trades and owning 60% of stocks and bonds. Seeking the highest yield in the short-term, and with no incentive to prefer capital gains over dividends (since they pay no current tax), the institutions relentlessly restructure their portfolios, with ephemeral loyalty to any particular investment. Thus the average turnover of shares held by institutions has increased from 21% per year in 1974 to 62% today. The result has been the erosion of long-term corporate investment horizons with 'fewer startup operations, less development of new products, ore bodies or oil fields, and more service businesses at the expense of capital-intensive manufacturing'. 23

Corporations have reacted to the pressures of institutional investors and the new rentier interest in several ways. First, a staggering amount of the liquidity generated by recent wage concessions, tax breaks and subsidiary sell-offs—estimated at over \$20 billion this year alone²⁴—has been deployed not for capital investment, but rather to enhance stock values through buy-backs and increased dividend payouts. Alternatively, corporate treasurers have ballooned short-term borrowings with the aim of preserving operating autonomy and of lessening the pressure to increase dividends. As the gearing ratio of long-term to short-term debt has fallen from 2.5 to parity, 25 heavily leveraged financial balance-sheets have become correspondingly vulnerable to rises in the interest rate. Like so many small Third World countries, scores of Fortune's 500 corporations threaten to become financial basket-cases in a new recessionary period.

Import Substitution Reagan-Style

The obverse side of the super-dollar's levy of international saving has been its depressive effect on traditional us manufacturing exports. The appreciation of the dollar has erased any competitive advantage that might have accrued from the 10% increase in industrial productivity

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    David Moths, 'Mark's '84 Issue', NTI, 3 September 1984, p. 25
    CEA, op cit, NTI, 17 June 1984, p. D14
    'Will the Money Managers Wreck the Economy', NW, 13 August 1984, p. 74
    Ibid, NW, 24 September 1984, p. 93, and 9 July 1984, p. 29
    NW, 16 August 1984, see 880, NTI, 8 August 1984, p. 4F.
    See Dm's, July 1984, p. 46
    NW, 9 July 1984, p. 29
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over the past three years.²⁶ In scores of cases, local unions have made sweeping work-rule and wage concessions 'to stay competitive' only to find their plant closed or relocated at the end of the day. In 1980, according to a Chase Econometrics study, the United States still maintained a strong competitive advantage with average manufacturing export prices 10% below the OECD average. Today us manufacture export prices are 25% above the OECD average, while, not surprisingly, the us volume share of world exports, steady from 1972 until 1983, has plummeted in the current 'boom'.²⁷ Seen sectorally, the export share of 15 us industries has increased, but that of 26 others has sharply declined—an almost exactly inverse ratio of sectoral competitiveness to Japan's.²⁸

We shall be looking below at the role of this year's \$130 billion American trade deficit in promoting an unbalanced restructuring of the international division of labour. But first it is important to consider the specific impact on the home industrial base. The current import invasion may be seen as the third wave in the gradual 'internationalization' of the American economy, as the proportion of us GNP involved in world trade has grown from a near-autarkic one-twelfth in the early 1960s to the present one-fifth. The first import boom in the 1960s was primarily composed of labour-intensive consumer goods and cheap electronics (although this era also saw Volkswagen's pioneering conquest of a significant auto market niche); the second ratchet move in the 1970s was primarily a result of rising energy imports. Today's third wave, however, is notable for the leading role of capital goods and high technology, whose import value has more than doubled since 1979 (to approx. \$58 billion, or fourteen times the 1970 level).²⁹

Table 2³⁰
Import Shares of us Markets

-	1960	1984
Auto	4.1	2.2
Steel	4.2	25.4
Apparel	1.8	30
Machine Tools	3.2	42

In the most dramatic case, the American machine-tool industry is in semi-collapse after the sudden spurt of imports during the last year from 32.5% to 42% of the market. General Motors' decision, in particular, to retool with \$100 million of Italian imports symbolizes the growing breach in the complex of formerly oligopolistic domestic industries integrated by auto production. Other hard-hit industries include tyre-making (import share rising from 8% in the late 1970s to over 20% today), farm equipment (formerly a us export monopoly, now being captured by the Japanese) and apparel (import share

[#] ww, 15 October 1984

²⁷ nw, 10 September 1984, p 68

[■] Ibed

²⁰ xw, 8 October 1984, pp 97-100, and MTT, 3 June 1984, p. 28F

³⁰ From EW, 30 June 1980 and 8 October 1984, MTF, 3 June 1984, p. 28F, FT, 3 November 1984, p. 11, and Farks, 7 November 1983

³¹ aw, 8 October 1984, pp 97-100

increasing at 25% per year).³² Ten years ago giant American construction companies like Bechtel and Fluor controlled half of the international contract-construction market, accounting for almost 20% of the manufacturing, and 10% of the service, exports of the United States. Today their world-market share has shrunk below 30%, while the entire us building industry is barely half of its former size.³³ Still, construction is undoubtedly healthier than American steel-making which, barring last-minute protectionism, will continue its decline into a mere finishing operation for imported steel production.³⁴

While imports were thus growing by 28% over the course of 1983, foreign investment was also climbing by 17%—a rather surprising statistic in view of the rising cost of American assets caused by the super-dollar. The explanation is the relative stagnation in the European, and even Japanese, home markets which has plunged profits below prevailing interest rates, and driven foreign multi-nationals to fight for larger permanent shares of the us domestic market. Faced with creeping us protectionism, but also attracted by relatively low-wage, non-union labour conditions in the American sunbelt, foreign companies are continuing to acquire us-based production facilities, often by the preferred route of buying up undervalued American equity; hence the spate of recent foreign acquisitions, culminating in Nestlés' purchase of Carnation—the largest non-oil deal (at \$3 billion) in business history. The Swiss food giant explained the move in terms of a strategy of raising us sales to 30% of its world-wide revenue.

This increasing dependence of foreign-based multinationals on the us market is reciprocated by American capital's attempts to outsource production to circumvent the competitive disadvantages of the strong dollar. In the most extreme cases, such as us Steel's plan to import British steel or Lonestar Cement's dumping of foreign cement, leading American manufacturers have simply become middlemen for the import invasion. Indeed, the possibility exists that formerly protected or oligopolistic us manufacturers may choose the option of 'leasing' part of their traditional market-share—especially at the 'downmarket' end to lower-cost foreign competitors. Thus General Motors, having publicly abandoned its much vaunted plan to introduce a new small car last year, is pursuing a so-called 'Asian strategy' of importing subcompacts from Suzuki and Isuzu, to be followed by even cheaper Korean Daewoos in 1987, and complemented with 250,000 Toyotas per year co-produced under Japanese management at GM's old Fremont, California plant.

These marketing and co-production agreements have been represented as temporary palliatives until GM's futuristic 'Saturn Project' can automate small-car production in the United States at cost levels below the Japanese. Indeed, the autoworkers' union has made sweeping concessions in its new 1984 contract—including implicit abandonment

²² See Farbu, 7 November 1983 and 13 August 1984

¹³ aw, 24 September 1984, pp 72-75, and Dm's, September 1983, p 38

[&]quot; Fr, World Steel", 5 November 1984, p. 14

³⁵ aw, 8 October 1984, p 93

³ sw, 24 September 1984, p 27

of its traditional shorter work-year strategy and acceptance of mass redundancies—in return for vague GM promises to bring Saturn onstream. But Chrysler Chairman, Lee Iacocca, has questioned GM's real motives and insinuated that the largest us automaker is, in fact, consolidating a far-reaching condominium agreement with the Japanese that would rent them the small-car market, while allowing GM to concentrate on competitive supremacy in the lucrative medium and large-car markets.³⁷ Planning for this eventuality, Ford and Chrysler are rapidly moving ahead with their own Asian strategies, with deleterious consequences for domestic auto employment (already one-quarter below 1978 levels). Auto industry analysts generally agree that if, as planned for March 1985, the quotas on Japanese imports are removed, the Japanese share of the American market will probably double from its present 19%, with domestic job losses of more than 250,000.³⁸

The New Corporate Order

A great ballyhoo has been made about the supposed role of capital spending in leading the recovery and assuring a decade-long prosperity. During his campaign Reagan repeatedly bandied figures about the 'greatest increase in investment in twenty-eight years', 'capital spending at three times the rate of consumption', and so on. In fact, the high rates of increase are first of all only an effect of the low starting point at the beginning of 1983, following the severe investment decline during the 1981-2 recession. At the end of last summer the investment share of GNP was still 6% below the 1981 level, although consumption was 1% higher—scarcely an unambiguous index of an investment-led expansion. Moreover Business Week predicts that capital spending in 1985 will be only one-quarter of the 1984 figure.

The celebrated role of fresh entrepreneurship in promoting the upturn—an article of faith in French and British homages to Reaganomics—is belied by the current decline in the stock sales of small companies and in the net supply of venture capital, whose volume is no more than one sixty-ninth of the capital involved in recent metger deals. ⁴² The real momentum of the expansion has come from 'services', which have been responsible for the lion's share of growth and investment and 85% of new job creation. ⁴³ As to new manufacturing investment, the major trend is job-displacing rationalization rather than job-creating expansion of capacity. With new plant construction stagnating below pre-recession levels, most capital spending has gone on items like small computers, imported machinery and robots: a reflection

²⁷ Iacocca interviewed by Jill Bettner in 'What's Good for the Isn't Good for the Country', Farks, 7 November 1984, pp. 43-44. Since Chrysler sold off its oversess production, it has become the leading voice of protectionism in Detroit, in uneasy unison with the UAW.

³⁸ Fr, 16 October 1984, 'Motor Industry Survey', p 6

³⁹ MTT, 3 June 1984, p 28F

⁴⁰ BW, 9 July 1984

⁴¹ aw, 19 November 1984

a sw, 9 July 1984

⁴³ sw, 29 October 1984, p. 15. By September the industrial recovery appeared to have run out of steam, as manufacturing employment decreased by 124,000 jobs, with the promise of more layoffs to come (See wsj, 26 October 1984)

of federal tax laws that favour the substitution of machines for workers.44

Perhaps the most significant tendency of the last two years, however, has been the remarkable tropism of manufacturing and transportation capital towards high-profit sectors like energy reserves, financial services, real estate, emergent technology, and, above all, defence. In some cases, the metamorphosis is startling, as in the recent conversion of us Steel into a medium-sized oil company. When the corporation purchased Marathon Oil in 1982 for \$6 billion, it produced an outcry amongst the tens of thousands of steelworkers who had accepted wage concessions in order to allow the company 'to re-vitalize basic steelmaking'. Now Chairman David Roderick, oblivious to the 100,000 jobless steelworkers in us Steel's home state of Pennsylvania alone, is hastening the pace of deindustrialization by diverting 80% of the corporation's capital budget to oil development, following the purchase of a second oil company (Husky Oil) in April for \$505 million. 45 In a similar, but less drastic, vein, the recently merged Santa Fe and Southern Pacific milroad system is retrenching in real estate, with plans to spend \$3 billion or more on waterfront developments in San Francisco and San Diego. 46

These mutant oil rentiers or marina proprietors, however, are only extreme examples of the general movement of corporate diversification. Thus American Can, Ashland Oil, Ethyl, Greyhound and St Regis have become major insurance sellers, while National Steel has gone into savings and loan, RCA into personal finance, Weyerhauser into mortgage banking, GE into aircraft leasing, and Xerox into investment banking. 47 Meanwhile, in the six years since Exxon squandered \$500 million in its failed bid to capture the office automation market, large industrial corporations have gobbled up more than 500 new technology firms, mostly with disastrous end results. 48 The major exception may be General Motors' \$2.5 billion purchase of Electronic Data Systems from Ross Perot, the right-wing Dallas entrepreneur who once organized private commando raids on Laos and now sits on GM's board. Flush with over \$9 billion in cash and securities, GM-which, as we have seen, is undertaking a radical restructuring of its global auto production aims to make EDS the giant in computer services. According to some accounts, GM Chairman Roger Smith, a financial expert promoted out of GM's defence division, may be planning to raise the eventual share of upstream technologies and new non-auto acquisitions to as much as 45% of total turnover.49

The single most important sectoral investment trend in the economy,

⁴⁴ See Dan's, July 1984, p. 46, and NTT, 17 June 1984

⁶ HTT, 10 July 1984, p. 26F, for unemployment in Pennsylvania, see waj, 23 August 1984

[#] aw, 27 August 1984, p 19 Only 16% of swar earnings now come from railroad traffic

⁷⁷ The diversification of industrial corporations into financial services has been stimulated by Carter/Reagan tax laws that allow the financial subsidies to shelter in the tax 'shedow' of the parent company's write-offs and depreciation. Thus shielded, oz Credit Company—to take one example—has been shie to become a major player in the leveraged buy-out game. See aw, 13 September 1984, p. 82, and MTr, 3 June 1984, p. 28F.

[&]quot;Failed Marriages', wsj, 11 September 1984

[&]quot; BW, 16 July 19\$4, pp 70-75

however, is the rush to mine the motherlode at Caspar Weinberger's Defense Department. Predictably, the new arms race has been the most important impetus in the recovery of key industrial sectors, supplying half the increased demand in aerospace and a fifth in primary and fabricated metals. 50 As Table 3 illustrates, military demand has also been the most dynamic sector of electronics growth in the upturn, and it is predicted that, as new military technologies go into production over the next decade, the electronics content of defence spending will increase 30%. 51

Table 3⁵²
The US Electronics Market (billions \$)

Sector	1983	1984	% change		
computers/office	41	48	17%		
military	34	44	29%		
communications	23	26	13%		
industrial	19	22	16%		
consumer	II	I 2	9%		
total	128	152	16%		

Overall, the projected \$1 trillion military expenditure for 1985-87 is expected to have an economic impact comparable to that of the Vietnam War at its height, claiming an equal proportion of national durable goods output (13%), even though the employment effect (1.2 million new defence-related jobs) will be less.⁵³

For the old 'Fordist' industrial core of the American economy—that is, for the complex of mass production industries and their suppliers now threatened by import competition—the Pentagon has been the chief instrument of restructuring. Goodyear, for instance, is actively cannibalizing its tyre production to shift into military aerospace (as well as oil and gas).54 General Tire (\$607 million in defence contracts) already forms a military conglomerate with Aeroject General, while the merged auto-component makers, Bendix/Autolite, are part of another (Allied Corporation), and both Ford and GM derive an important part of their cashflow from billion-dollar Pentagon contracts.55 Meanwhile, traditional big-ten defence contractors like General Dynamics, Lockheed, Douglas and Raytheon are becoming less diversified and more strictly dependent on Pentagon fixes, as they move out of less profitable civilian product lines. Willard Rockwell, the legendary founder of Rockwell International—the manufacturer of the MX and B-I systems—caused a minor storm when he resigned from the board, charging that the company's future had been irresponsibly mortgaged to the Reagan military programme. (Not surprisingly his successor, Robert Anderson, has cultivated special influence with the White House, twice being appointed by Reagan as chairman of National United Nations Day. 50)

³⁹ Bruce Steinberg, "The Military Boost to Industry', Fortune, 50 April 1984

³¹ Electronic Bennett, 10 July 1984, p 97

n Ibid

³³ Steinberg, op cit.

⁵⁴ Forture, 8 May 1984

²⁵ See the regular listings of defence contracts in Assatron Wooldy and Space Technology

⁵⁶ BW, 25 June 1984, and MTT, 30 September 1984.

The Meaning of the Merger Epidemic

If one cumulative result of these various trends is a centrifugal weakening of the coherence and economic centrality of older massproduction industries in the macro-economy, another is the considerable strengthening of the principle of financial conglomeration in corporate organization. The evolution of formerly integrated manufacturing corporations into diversified, super-holding-companies, dominated by speculative financial strategies (and abetted by new electronic technologies of centralized control), is undoing the famous 'Sloanian' revolution that rationalized the management of vertically integrated manufacturing oligopolies, after the model of Alfred Sloan's General Motors in the 1920s. Correlatively it is also undermining, probably irretrievably, the system of industrial relations and union-company 'compromise' associated with the General Motors paradigm of corporate rationality. Arguably IBM—which now has a larger cashflow than GM57—might be seen as the pioneer of a new, more advanced model of industrial integration with a corresponding (non-union) industrial relations practice. But IBM, like GM in the 1930s, is that unique instance of a selffinancing giant, with super-profits capable of carrying its long-range investment programmes through periods of recession and soaring interest, while its diverse product markets grow and mature. Few of even the largest contemporary corporations possess the financial freedom of manoeuvre of GM or IBM, or their planning horizons.

Instead the hurried re-deployments of industrial capital towards primary, tertiary or military investments are paralleled by the predatory pursuit of other companies' assets. What Robert Reich calls 'paper entrepreneurialism'—'the rearrangement of industrial assets in the hope of short-term gains'—has inexorably increased over the past decade as 82 members of the Fortune 500 have been swallowed up and \$398 billion (the GNP of Italy) expended on mergers. The Reagan recovery has brought this merger mania to a fever pitch reminiscent of the final days of the 1920s boom: by the end of last summer 15 billion-dollar-plus mergers had been made and an aggregate dollar volume record had been set. In the course of this convulsion a new Wall Street language has been spawned to describe the strategems of takeover and resistance: 'two-tier tender offers, Pac-Man and poison pill defences, crown jewel options, golden parachutes and self tenders'. 60

Although the outbreak of this latest merger epidemic should probably be dated to the calamitous manage à trois between Bendix, Martin Marietta and Allied in 1982, the leading actors have been the oil companies, pursuing the dictum that the cheapest place to find oil reserves is on Wall Street. Thus Texaco paid \$10.1 billion for Getty, while Standard of California (now Chevron) forked out a cool \$13.1 billion for Gulf. In most cases the mergers have been shotgun marriages

²⁷ Dm's, July 1984, p. 49 mm's revenues remain approximately 55% of one's but are expected to double over the next decade may and one, therefore, may well be of equivalent size in the 1990s

Fortum, 30 April 1984, p. 105, and Robert Resch, The Next American Frontur, New York 1983, p. 141

э нтт, 3 July 19\$4, pp D1 and D7

[●] Ibid, p D7

of a type, forced by alliances with institutional share-holders and financed by borrowed capital. Indeed, most of these so-called 'leveraged buyouts' (LBOS) are 'overleveraged' by dint of the incentives given in the Carter and Reagan tax bills to the substitution of debt for equity capital. They are, in the words of *Forbes*, 'subsidized by the taxpayers'.61

The LBO phenomenon has allowed a flamboyant group of sunbelt speculators including independent oil leaseholders like T. Boone Pickens and the Bass Family, hotelier J. Willard Marriott Jr., and others to become the latter-day buccaneers of Wall Street. Their strategy has been to intervene in impending takeover battles between major oil companies or other large firms, leveraging enough stock and stockholder proxies to demand lucrative 'greenmail'. Thus the Bass Brothers made \$400 million in pre-tax profits from their takeover threat to Texaco (which ended up paying out a total of \$1.29 billion to obtain the Basses' 10% share and their promise not to meddle for ten years), while Pickens creamed half-a-billion dollars one afternoon last spring when Chevron outbid him for Gulf. The Basses are now allied to Marriott, a notorious non-union employer, in pursuit of Conrail (in competition with a bid from the railroad's own employees); the redoubtable Pickens, whose own Mesa Petroleum has an annual turnover of only \$422 million, 18 meanwhile building a \$6 billion war chest to raid \$60 billion Mobil Oil.62

The very possibility that a previously obscure Amarillo oilman could now be stalking the second largest American multinational exemplifies the way in which Reaganomics and the current boom are reshaping the map of corporate power and political influence. (Marriott is a leading Republican fundraiser; the Bass Family, virtual rulers of Fort Worth, were prominent in organizing the Republican convention-cum-Nuremberg-rally; and Pickens is widely tipped as Reagan's nominee for governor of Texas in 1986.) In 'The New Politics of Inequality', Thomas Edsall has described the crucial role of the dozen or so independent oil political action committees—dominated by Pickens, the Basses, the Murchisons, the Pewes, the Hunts, and so on—in engineering the end of Democratic control in the Senate and electing Reagan.

According to Edsall, the oil independents, flush with new billions from the 1970s energy price explosion and rapidly diversifying into real estate and leisure industries, have provided the 'financial glue' between the New Right and the Republican Party. Constituting an estimated one-third of the major joint contributors to Republican and conservative causes, the oil independents are the core of a new power-bloc which, thanks to the continuing shift of capital and tax revenues to the West and the South, is displacing Northeastern multinationals in the active

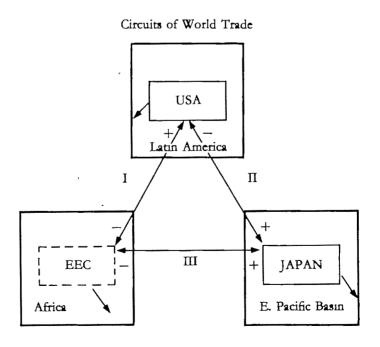
⁴ Ferber, 13 August 1984

⁴² See Cathleen Stander, 'How the Bass Brothers Do Their Deals', Fortune, 17 September 1984. A listing of the Bass Pamily's current assets is like a random compilation from a Chinese encyclopedia. a Minnesota underwear maker, the nation's largest pixra topping maker, a San Francisco shopping mall, a Jack Niclaus golf course, 5% of Walt Dracey, 5% of a freed chicken chain, nine industrial parks in Chicago, Baltimore, and Atlanta, a subsidised housing project in Puerto Rico, property in Florida, North Carolina, and California, \$100 million cash for the recent sale of the Atlantic City Sands Casino, and, finally, the biggest chunk of down-town Fort Worth.

control of the Republican apparatus. In this sense, the recent near-extinction of 'moderate Republicanism'—i.e., the Dewey-Rockefeller wing dominant from 1940 to 1964—is part of a larger pattern involving the supplantation of Fordism and the rise of new rentier and military-contractor networks. Profiting so stupendously from the recent infusion of debt and defence spending, together with the perpetuation of the sun-belt boom, the new powerbrokers of Republicanism, for all their anti-state rhetoric, are unlikely to act as anything other than the most avid supporters of the current, pathological prospenty.

II. The Wobbling Axes of World Trade

The burgeoning us trade deficit, projected to exceed \$130 billion or almost 3% of GNP, has been the prime mover of the weak recovery of world trade. Exports to the United States are now calculated to comprise 25% to 40% of GNP growth in Western Europe and capitalist East Asia. But the celebrated Reagan 'locomotive' is hardly pulling trading nations in even tow. While Japan and the East Asian NICs have accelerated in pace or shead of the United States, the EEC has coasted along in low gear, and the larger economies of Latin America and Africa have remained derailed. The uneven, contradictory character of the 'upturn' is a surface expression of the structural disarticulation taking place in the world economy. Consider the following schema:



¹³ Thomas Eduill, The New Politics of Inequality, New York 1984, pp 93-94, 100-02

⁴ Fortan, 1 October 1984, p. 11

Abstracting from the redistributive role of energy trade balances in the organization of the world economy (and, therefore, from opec's role), we can say that a tendential coherence in world accumulation existed through the 1970s on the basis of the following interrelationships: (1) The United States manufacturing deficit with East Asia (cars, electronics, apparel) was balanced by a more-or-less equivalent surplus (in 1980, \$20 billion) with Europe (computers, aerospace). (2) Simultaneously, the net us trade surplus with Latin America was offset by an outflow of us direct investment, especially to Brazil and Mexico. (3) The European manufacturing deficits with the United States and Japan were compensated by capital-goods surpluses with the Third World, especially Africa. (4) Finally, Japan's surpluses with Europe and North America enabled it to pay its energy and raw material bills, while exporting capital to the East Asian NICs and Australasia.

Where us military hegemony and monetary sovereignty once provided coherence for this system of interrelationships, it now has become the principal disorganizing force. First, the shift in internal American demand from mass consumption towards surrogate affluent and military markets has generated, as we have seen, the spiraling budget and trade deficits that have further unbalanced the 'great triangle' of intermetropolitan trade, while simultaneously siphoning off European and Japanese savings. Secondly, the collective trusteeship now operated by the Western banks over the economies of Latin America has confiscated whatever developmental gains they might have achieved in the current expansion of us trade. Indeed, the traditional relationship has been stood on its head as Latin America runs a trade surplus and exports capital to the United States. The neo-classical burden of adjustment to this new trading order has been borne by the poorest inhabitants of the hemisphere, including the millions of flagelados (or 'scourged ones') estimated to have starved to death in Northeastern Brazil in the course of the first Reagan administration.65

Thirdly, primary commodity prices have yet to recover from the ruinous collapse of 1981-2 when they fell to their lowest post-war level. Monocultural producers are caught in a classic scissors crisis between the depressed prices of their exports and the high interest on their debts. Quite apart from the spectre of sovereign default and the perils of a financial panic, the current depression in the Third World, in black Africa as well as Latin America, is an important restraint on any export-led strategy of European reflation, exacerbating the EEC's deficits with East Asia and increasing its dependence on American markets. Fourthly, while Japan—two-thirds of whose increased exports since 1983 have been absorbed by the United States—and the Four Tigers'—who shipped \$8.5 billion to the United States in the first quarter of 1984 alone—are the primary beneficiaries of the Reagan boom, it is, as we

⁴⁵ Information publicized by Don Ivo Lorsheiter, president of the National Council of Brizilian Bishops

^{**} Primary commodities declined 15% in 1981; 12% in 1982. See Ke-Young Chu and Thomas K Mormson, "The 1981-82 Recession and Non-Oil Primary Commodity Prices", intr Staff Papers, 51, 1 (March 1984)

shall see, at the price of postponed reform of their domestic market and increased vulnerability to an American recession.⁶⁷

The obvious pattern is therefore one of growing incoherence and imbalance at each strategic trade juncture. But—to play devil's advocate on behalf of the neo-liberals—what if all this disorder in the world economy is only the confusion of a transition from an old smokestack capitalism to a new silicon-chip entrepreneurialism? Is not the Reagan boom shifting the centre of gravity of world capitalism from the Atlantic to the brave new world on California's shore? Let us briefly consider the impact of the upturn on the Old World's competitiveness, as well as the evidence for the emergence of a new geo-economic axis in the Pacific.

European Sunset. . .

One of the ironies of the present expansion is that the new European merchandise surplus with the United States—a projected \$14 billion in 198468 far from signalling a renewal of European capitalist vigour, is merely a symptom of the stagnation of European internal demand that is reorienting the larger multinationals towards North America. European capital is caught in a structural scissors crisis of its own. On the one hand, the project of European capitalist unity is seriously, if not fatally, compromised by the competitive adaptations of the different national economies to a new international division of labour.69 On the other hand, the class stalemate in Europe, which prevents labour from taking the offensive against unemployment, has also prevented the right from engaging in any experiment in American-style growth based on polarized immiseration and affluence within a reduced welfare state. In effect, European capitalism has been unable to achieve either the economies of scale associated with an integrated continental market, or the management of social demand associated with a more unilateral class power of the right or left.

As a result, Europe has virtually lost superpower status in the current technological-scientific revolution. Back in 1970 the 'Colonna Memorandum' of the European Community posed the urgency of confronting the American challenge in advanced technology, and outlined bold moves to encourage cross-border mergers and hasten the integration of a common market in electronics. Now, nearly fifteen years later, the leading European manufacturer of integrated circuits, Philips, ranks barely twelfth in the world, while Europe's premier computer-maker, Olivetti, has an annual turnover only 1/17th that of IBM. To European-made computers supply only 17% of the European market (us share,

⁴⁷ See Fr, 'World Economic Survey', 17 September 1984

⁴⁸ German exports to the United States have increased by over 50% during the last year. See 2W, 24. September 1984, p. 27.

⁴⁹ Of the voluminous literature on the 'crisis of Europe', see particularly, Gilbert Ziebura, 'International Division of Labor, and the Role of the European Community', Journal of Common Market Stades, XXI, 1/2 (September 1984), and M. Albert and R. J. Ball, Towards European Recovery in the 1986s, working paper, European Parhament, July 1983

^{**} Michel Richonnier, 'Europe's Decline is not Irreversible', Journal of Common Market Studies, XXII, 3 (March 1984), p. 236

81%), while less than 6% of the world's integrated circuits—the 'steam engines' of current technology—are produced in Europe.⁷¹ In an investigation of competition in the world electronics industry, the Joint Economic Committee of the us Congress concluded in 1982 that 'the battle for presminence [in integrated circuits] is today a fight between American (67% of world market) and Japanese (26%) manufacturers, to be fought in American and European markets.⁷⁷²

Cross-national cooperation and horizontal centralization have both proven quixotic goals for European electronics and information-processing industries, starting with the collapse of the first 'European' computer consortium, Unidata, in 1974 Of fifty major international information-technology mergers or joint ventures between 1980 and 1983, only two were intra-European; of the rest, half were joint American and Japanese projects, and half were European and American. Although the EEC finally initiated a common R&D programme, ESPRIT, in 1981, its fruits will probably only come on stream to industry in the 1990s. Meanwhile, the EEC's share of world information technology systems could fall over the next decade from 20% to 15%, while its trading deficit in information technology, already \$3.2 billion in 1982, could increase to \$16 billion by 1992.74

With 70% of the European mainframe market in its hands, IBM is poised to take commanding positions in all sectors of the evolving electronics and information complex.75 The 'amicable' settlement of the EEC antitrust suit last summer paved the way for its expansion into factory automation (a \$30 billion market by 1990) and telecommunications. At stake are not merely market shares, but IBM's ability to impose its 'systems standards' over whole industries. The Thatcher government's recent veto of a proposed IBM-Telecom venture was explicitly justified in terms of preventing IBM from making its Systems Network Architecture the standard for British telecommunications. In the long run, however, it is unlikely that isolated rearguard actions by single European states can protect their postal and telecommunications systems—any more than their already marginalized computer industries from being colonized by vertically integrated world giants like IBM and ATT (recently married to Olivetti). Indeed, the current expansion only seems to be accelerating the erosion of Europe's technological sovereignty as local companies, even state monopolies, are forced into the grid of interdependency centred on the dominant foreign technology vendors.

. . . Pacific Sunrise?

One of Marx's more inadvertent exercises in futurology was his prediction, at the time of the California gold rush, that the 19th century would oversee the shift of commercial hegemony from the old lands of

⁷ Stephen Woolcock, Information Technology the Challenge to Europe', Journal of Common Market Studies, XXII, 4 (June 1984), p 318

⁷² Ibed

⁷³ Ibsd

M Ibid

⁷⁵ Cf aw, 16 June, 13 August, and 20 August 1984

the Atlantic to the new lands of the Pacific. ⁷⁶ In the event, the westward perambulation of the world spirit has been slower than prophesied. Indeed, it has only been since the inauguration of Ronald Reagan that the idea of a huge geopolitical displacement in the regulation of the world economy has gained more than superficial plausibility.

Several kinds of recent data can now be submitted on behalf of this thesis. First is the leading, almost one-sided, role of Pacific trade which distinguishes this expansion from other post-war upturns. Since 1980, the Pacific Basin has eclipsed the North Atlantic as the United States' principal trading zone, and, indicatively, Taiwan has now surpassed Great Britain as an American trading partner. Moreover, as Table 4 illustrates, there has been a particularly dramatic reversal during the last decade in the relative importance of 'Atlantic' and 'Pacific' manufacturing imports to the United States:

Table 4⁷⁸
Manufacturing Import Shares of us Market

		Ū	•	1973	1980	1983
I.	'Atlantic' (Europe			.,,		
	+ Canada)			61%	50%	43%
П.	Pacific' (Asıa +					
	Latin America)			35%	48%	54%
Ш.	Other			4%	2%	2%

Secondly, Pacific capitalism, including California (considered independently as the sixth largest capitalist economy), has continued to grow at twice the rate of Europe. In the 1970s the ten countries that now comprise the EEC had a GNP equal to that of the United States, and twice that of the ten leading Pacific Basin economies. This year the EEC's GNP had shrunk to 93% of the United States', while the Pacific Ten have grown to two-thirds the size of the EEC. Finally, the majority of the capitalist world's science-based industry and research-and-development is now probably located along the Pacific Rim, in California and Japan. Microelectronics is the first technological-scientific revolution not to be pioneered in Europe or primarily developed within the ambit of Atlantic trade.

These are the trends that encourage the image of a 'Pacific sunrise', so soothing in the hot-tubs of California, so unsettling in the corridors of the Bourse or the City. But it is manifestly unrealistic to expect that the present patterns of Pacific exchange can substitute for the broken circuitry of Fordism in the United States, for the stagnation of demand

[&]quot;The centre of gravity of world commerce, Italy in the Middle Ages, England in modern times, is now the southern half of the North American pennisuls. Thanks to California gold and the tireless energy of the Yankees, both coasts of the Pacific Ocean will soon be as populous, as open to trade and as industrialized as the coast from Boston to New Orleans is now. And then the Pacific Ocean will have the same role as the Atlantic has now and the Mediterranean had in antiquity and in the Middle Ages—that of the great water highway of world commerce, and the Atlantic will decline to the status of an inland sea . . . 'Marx and Engels, 'Review', January—Pebruary 1950, in Collected Works, volume 10, London 1978, pp. 265—66

⁷⁷ Fortage, 28 May 1984, p 30

Adapted from La Monde, 5 June 1984

⁷⁹ Brien Reading, 'Demine of Western Europe', The Sandey Timer, 5 February 1984, p. 6

in Europe, or for the strangulation of consumer production and cereal agriculture in the Third World. Quite the contrary: the present export boom to the United States is itself, in some sense, an unstable substitute for the failure of East Asian capitalism to raise domestic demand or to achieve a more balanced regional economic order.

In Japan the Nakasone regime, to the disquiet of some factions of the ruling party, has continued to privilege the development of a high-tech arms industry, synchronized to Pentagon procurement needs, over the long-overdue upgrading of the social infrastructure. Meanwhile the spring 1984 shorts (or wage offensive) under the leadership of the right-wing enterprise unions has produced the smallest wage increase since 1955. As the wage share of the GNP is held down, and the export offensive more than ever bears the burden of sustaining employment, the threat of European and American protectionism casts clouds over a risen sun.

The position of the four smaller Northeast Asian capitalist states is still more precarious, as their traditional export advantages in labourintensive manufacture are being erased by the competition of poorer ASEAN neighbours, factory automation in the United States, and a significant relocation of sweated industry from Asia to the Caribbean. In the rush to win new niches in capital-intensive or high-tech exports, the virtuous product cycle that allowed them to take over Japan's cast-off industries (usually with the help of Japanese investment) has broken down. They have become more directly competitive with mainline Japanese export sectors and with advanced Japanese technology. South Korea's multi-billion-dollar gamble that it can create a national auto industry ex mbilo has been particularly questioned. In a major survey of the Northeast Asian division of labour, Bruce Cummings has argued that under the new conditions of international competition created during the 1970s, there remained room for only one 'new Japan'. In his estimation, 'Taiwan was chosen but the ROK was not', with grave implications for the latter's authoritarian stability.80

A Crisis of Tigers and Cowboys

In contrast to the Pacific sunrise scenario, I would suggest the possibility that the present unstable expansion is creating the basis for a downturn that may deepen into crisis precisely along the current axis of growth, from the American sunbelt to industrial East Asia. The hothouse economic conditions that have prevailed in these areas almost uninterruptedly since the beginning of the Vietnam War have created vast new productive complexes and working classes, but they have also nurtured unprecedented accumulations of fictitious capital. If at one shore of the Pacific the relative underconsumption of the East Asian proletariats sets an inescapable constraint on growth; so, on the other shore, the rampant mega-consumption of the California middle classes poses a threat to financial stability.

⁸⁰ Bruce Cummings, "The Origins and Development of the Northeast Asian Polincal Economy", International Organization, Winter 1984, p. 35

Since the 1970s a disproportionate share of American wealth has been absorbed in the capitalization of soaring real-estate values, commercial building booms, inflated mineral equities, and overdeveloped service industries in the Western and Southern states. Now, having battened off the decline of the old industrial heartland, this great superstructure of non-productive income-claims is feeding off the savings of the entire capitalist world. In the meantime, financial analysts, still stunned by the Continental Illinois collapse, are nervously eyeing the health of a large group of sunbelt banks (including the behemoth Bank of America) that have recklessly validated local real-estate and energy-asset speculation while simultaneously over-extending themselves in Latin America. 81 One potential vector of such a financial crisis is the recent slump in Western states' energy industries that has reduced employment and jeopardized the collateral value of reserves. 82

In the short-run, of course, it may be possible for the Reagan administration to continue to avoid a deep recession by simply conscripting more liquidity into global lending circuits. One strategy is to internationalize the yen and recycle the Japanese trade surplus to the credit-hungry and unstable sectors of the world economy. Already the Americans have won a significant deregulation of the Japanese banking system and increased the volume of syndicated yen-loans available to international borrowers. But a full-fledged 'euro-yen' remains merely a theoretical possibility, with hotly disputed implications for the growth of world credit. As the boom stalls and threatens to expire, the most readily available and potent instrument of expansion remains the Federal Reserve's power to sanction monetary inflation. Thus, almost within hours of Reagan's re-election, supply-side scalping parties were once again after Paul Volcker, whose supposed refusal to increase the money supply is blamed for the sharp third-quarter slow-down. The supplysiders' goal—endorsed by Meese and Reagan within the Administration—is to replace Volcker with a true-believer, like FED Vice-Chairman Preston Martin, who could be relied upon to sustain high growth even at the risk of renewed inflation.

The second wave of Reaganomics, then, will probably lean even further than the first towards a purely political regulation of the business cycle such as the Democrats never dared and never dreamed. Indeed, one French observer has called the current recovery 'the greatest example of state voluntarism in the post-war epoch'83: a perverse Keynesianism that unexpectedly reinsured the unity of the 'Haves' coalition that first elected Reagan in 1980. This great conjuring act has created an illusion

^{*}I "The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation recently told Congress that classified assets—loans whose quality is questionable at best—rose to 58% of capital for all insured banks last year, up from 50% in 1979. And the bulk of the problem loans remains overwhelmingly comestic.' Most of the examples cred are located in California or Texas. ("Behind the Banking Turmoil", sw, x9 October 1984, p. 7.) Meanwhile, in November 1984, the Comptroller of the currency has startled the financial world with a demand that Bank/merica strengthen its capital base—an action that can only mase amonety about the solvency of the nation's largest bank.

⁵² It is little appreciated that the current oil alump has cost as many jobs (over 100,000) in metropolitan Houston as the steel alump has in Pittsburgh. On the structural crisis of the Texas economy, see NTT, 16 September 1944, p. F9

⁸⁵ Philippe Norel, 'Comment l'Europe et le Japon sont mobilisés au secours de l'économie américaine', La Mande Diphémetages, August 1984, pp. 20–21

of Yuppie mobility and self-confidence—'the conservative opportunity society'—that has besotted a large part of the white working class as well. Despite Mondale's desperate promotion of the deficit as the issue of the campaign, the contradictions between the economic interests of different sectors of capital, and between the corporate economy and the diverse middle strata, were once again repressed in the larger plebiscite on the new prosperity. But, as I have tried to indicate, there is an impending point at which the costs of assuring expansion cannot be entirely displaced onto the domestic poor, the Third World, or even foreign capitalists. Unlike 1981, when virtually the whole burden of Reaganomics could be loaded upon the working poor, the fiscal and budgetary battles of 1985 presume some cutbacks within the 'Haves' bloc itself. In particular, the struggle between the promoters of tax 'simplification' and the partisans of deficit-reduction-at-all-costs can be interpreted as the beginning of a divergence between the nouveau riche and corporate wings of Reaganomics. The 'conservative populism' of Kemp and Gingrich explicitly aims to unify the new middle classes and high-tech entrepreneurs against the 'growth-stifling' policies of the 'corporate Establishment'.84

Meanwhile the old guard of American liberalism prays for an imminent recession in the same desperate way that drought-stricken farmers pray for rain. Conceding Reagan's re-election months before 6 November, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. sketched his vision of Democratic renewal: a withering recession in 1986 or 1987, cutting through the vitals of Yuppidom and bringing a chastened middle class back to a Democratic Party reunited by a new Kennedy-figure.85 The crucial assumption in this scenario, of course, is that a coming crisis of sunbelt affluence will turn the 'Me Generation' to the 'left'—that is, back towards old-guard liberalism. Nothing seems less likely. Instead, relentlessly conditioned by Reaganomics to expect prosperity as their 'divine right'86, the software aristocracy and the boutique bourgeoisie might well be radicalized towards a post-Reagan far right, perhaps in violent enmity to the new Jews of the barrios and ghettoes.87 (In a similar vein, confronted with a depression-shattered boom economy and a declassé petty bourgeoisie. Upton Sinclair warned in the 1930s of the 'Californazis'.) In that case, what Yuppie Messiah slouches towards Bethlehem?

²⁴ Richard Viguene, the direct mail wisard of the New Right, has recently lashed out against the 'corporate domination' of the Republican Party, threatening a third party in 1988 if the 'populist' promise of Reaganomics is betrayed in the second term

In symposium with Kevin Phillips, Walter Dean Burnham, and Jerry Brown, in The New York Review, 16 August 1984, pp. 33-38

[&]quot;The Wall Street Journal (24 August 1984) recently noted the rise of a new Christianity specifically purched to "Yuppies" and emphasizing a sinless creed of "bappiness now". Its leading evangelist is the Rev. Terry Cole-Whitaker of San Diego, an ex-Miss America contestant, who proclaims on her namonally syndicated tw programme. "You can have it all now! Being rich and happy doesn't earry with it a burden of guilt. If you are poor, you're irresponsible." Her followers brandish badges and humper stockers proclaiming "Prosperity Is Your Divine Right!"

¹⁷ In the *New York Rames* discussion with Schlesinger, Walter Dean Burnham challenged the former's confidence that a crists of the middle classes would revivify liberalism. He invoked the counterexamples of Afrikaaner politics in South Africa and the Likud in Israel.

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The Myth of Germany's Missing Revolution

It is now over half a century since Hitler came to power in Germany, inaugurating twelve years of bloodshed and destruction without parallel in human history. Throughout this period the Nazi phenomenon has posed a major challenge to human understanding. Why should fascism, in such an extreme, racist and destructive form, have taken power in Germany and not elsewhere? Why should German parliamentary democracy have collapsed so totally and so easily in the economic crisis of 1929–33—a crisis which, after all, had a severe impact on other countries besides Germany? Those historians who have not seen the events of 1933 either as a complete accident, as German conservatives tended to do in the 1950s, 1 or as the product of some inbuilt weakness of the German 'national character', as Allied wartime propaganda was inclined to argue, 2 have looked to the peculiarities of Germany's political and social structures for an answer. In recent years the argument that these structures remained uniquely backward and overwhelmingly hostile to parliamentary democracy has gained a wide currency. It is an

argument with a long pedigree. Harold Laski, writing in 1943, argued that Germany had never experienced a bourgeois revolution, and that its traditional ruling class had never adapted to the twentieth century. Talcott Parsons, writing in 1942, referred to the persistence of feudalism, the power of the bureaucracy, the domination of organized interest groups over political parties and the bourgeois taste for titles as elements in a specifically German system of values. The crisis of these values in the Weimar Republic produced the desire to recover them through the institution of the Nazi dictatorship. The growing influence of sociology over historical scholarship since the 1960s has contributed to the spread of this conception and at the same time has reformulated it, to a greater or lesser degree, in terms of 'modernization theory'.

Ralf Dahrendorf, writing in 1960, cited the verdict of Thorstein Veblen. published as early as 1915, that Germany had experienced a capitalist industrial revolution while retaining a feudal social tradition and a dynastic state; the bourgeoisie had adopted the values of the aristocracy and the landowners continued to control the major institutions of the state—the army, the bureaucracy and the court. Dahrendorf might have added that such a view found support in the writings of other, less theoretically-minded contemporaries of Veblen. Winston Churchill described the German government in 1911 as 'a military and bureaucratic oligarchy supported by a powerful Junker landlord class', and Lord Northcliffe, writing in the same year, also saw a danger of war in 'the precarious position of German industry and the determination of the Prussian Junkers to force on, if possible, some foreign complication in order to prevent the destruction of their privileges by internal reform'.5 Dahrendorf used these ideas to argue that Germany was a case of partial or unsuccessful modernization (economic but not political). For his part, Barrington Moore, writing in 1966, used the term 'conservative modernization' to describe essentially the same thing—an alliance between a dominant old ruling class and a weak, subordinate bourgeoisie through which the economy was transformed while the social and political power structure was not.6

The Structural Continuity Thesis

Thus many recent historians have suggested, in Hans-Ulrich Wehler's phrase, that a 'central problem' of the history of modern Germany was

¹ The lacer classics of this view is Gerhard Ritter, "The Historical Foundation of the Rise of National-Socialism", in *The Third Risel*, International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, London 1955. Other contemporaries were less certain, however, e.g. Friedrich Meinecke, *The German Cestattrophe Reflections and Recollections*, Harvard 1950.

² Roban D'Oler Butler, The Rosts of National Secontrier, London 1941, see also A. J. P. Taylor, The Course of German History, London 1945

³ Harold J. Laski, Reflections on the Revolution of Our Times, London 1943

^{*} Talcott Parsons, 'Democracy and Social Structure in Pre-Nam Germany', in T. Parsons, Esseys in Sandagood Theory, Glencoe 1954.

³ Cated in Jonathan Steinberg, The Kaiser and the British. The State Visit to Windsor, November 1907, in John C G Rohl and Nicolaus Sombart (eds.), Kaiser Wilholm II Naw Interpretations, Cambridge 1982, p. 132

⁶ Raif Dahrendorf, Secrety and Democracy in Germany, London 1968, Thorstein Vehlen, Imparial Germany and the Industrial Revolution, London 1915, Barrington Moore, Jr. Second Origins of Dictatorship and Domocracy, London 1967

'the defence of inherited ruling positions by pre-industrial elites against the onslaught of new forces'. Michael Stürmer has also written of 'pre-industrial elites' preventing the political consequences ('democratization') of the industrial revolution ('economic rationalization'). And Volker Berghahn has remarked that 'if one considers the history of the Bismarckian Empire, one encounters at every step the formative influence of social forces whose first aim—from the founding of the Empire to the collapse of the monarchy in 1918—was to prevent an alteration of the political and social status quo, with every means at their disposal." Berghahn claims in the same passage that these 'forces' 'resisted every change'. 10

Likewise, in a brief exposition of the main features of the Imperial German political system, Peter-Christian Witt has written of its domination by the pre-industrial elite's 'aim of maintaining the political and social status quo . . . at least insofar as the mass of the population, namely the industrial working class and the propertyless inhabitants of the countryside, were denied any participation in political decision-making and any social emancipation . . . and the liberal bourgeoisie, at least insofar as it took liberal ideas seriously, was only allowed to play the role of a cheer-leader. 111

Immanuel Geiss has described 'the second German Empire among other things as an attempt—unsuccessful on the whole—to ward off the political consequences of the industrial revolution which had been in the making for some 200 years'.¹² The Empire stood, as Dieter Groh has argued, 'under the compromise formula of industrialization without political innovation' and was dominated by the continuing power of 'late-feudal, agrarian strata'.¹³ Indeed, Siegfried Mielke actually entitled an introductory section of his book on the Hansa-Bund: 'The Political System: Maintenance of the Domination of the Feudal Aristocracy'.¹⁴

Jürgen Kocka, too, has noted 'the importance of the landowning aristocracy and its socio-cultural values for the "feudalization" of the bourgeois upper classes and its concomitant illiberal and anti-democratic consequences . . .'. 15 Kenneth Barkin has referred to Veblen in pointing out the 'anomaly' in Germany's development, that 'here was the major industrial power in Europe led by a Junker oligarchy whose economic base was declining and whose views on industrial capitalism belonged to an earlier era.' Barkin himself alludes to 'the "feudal" ethos that pervaded the German elites and institutions such as the army', and cites Baron von Stumm as 'the epitome of the "feudalized" industrialist'

⁷ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Dar deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918, Gottingen 1973, p. 14

⁸ Michael Sturmer, Reguring and Rochitag in Biomerchitant 1871–1888, Dunieldorf 1974, pp. 198–9

Volker R. Berghahn, Der Turjutz-Plan, Dunseldorf 1917, p. 192

^{*} III

¹¹ Peter-Christian Witt, Innenpolitik und Imperialismus in der Vorgeschichte des 1 Wehtkrieges', in Karl Holl, Gunter List (eds.), Liberahismus und imperialismusker Staat, Gottingen 1971, p. 13

²³ Immanuel Geisa, 'Sozialstruktur und imperialistische Dispositionen im Zweiten Deutschen Kaiserreich', in shid, p. 43.

¹³ Dieter Groh, Negative Integration and revolutionary: Attentioner, Frankfurt 1974, p. 13

Siegfried Mielke, Der Hann-Bend für Gewebe, Handel mid Industrie 1999-1914, Göttingen 1976, p. 17
 Jurgen Kocks, 'Vorindustrielle Faktoren in der deutschen Industrialisierung', in Michael Sturmer

⁽ed.), Das Kasserhele Dantschland, Dusseldorf 1970, pp. 161-6.

because he 'built a castle and ran his factories on the model of a Junker estate'. ¹⁶ There are many other examples of such statements. ¹⁷

The most crucial point in the struggle for survival of the pre-industrial, feudal or semi-feudal aristocracy was, it is widely agreed, the 1848 Revolution. As Barkin notes, the peculiarities of the Germans in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the twentieth originated above all in the fact that 'Germany modernized without experiencing a successful social or political revolution. Only Japan among the major industrial powers bears comparison in this respect. The Junker oligarchy remained extremely powerful nationally and almost omnipotent in the local politics of rural Prussia. Attempts to wrest power away from them by the commercial and professional classes failed in 1848 and again in 1862.'18

In 1848, in A. J. P. Taylor's phrase, 'German history reached its turning-point and failed to turn': ¹⁹ it was the point at which the German bourgeoisie failed to displace the feudal aristocracy as its French counterpart had succeeded in doing in 1789. 'The bourgeoisie was the class that could have taken the leadership in 1848', remarks Kitchen, but 'the bourgeoisie of 1848 was not equal to the task of taking on this role. They had already made their historic compromise with the old order.' The crucial question indeed, as Winkler put it from the perspective of the 20th century, is: 'Why had the German bourgeoisie, unlike the French, not overcome the political domination of the aristocracy much earlier? Why the failure of the 1848 Revolution?' Theodore Hamerow has even gone so far as to claim that 'the mistakes of 1848 had to be paid for not in 1849, but in 1918, 1933 and 1945.' 22

In this view, which I shall refer to as the 'structural continuity thesis', German history differed sharply from that of other nations which underwent a full bourgeois revolution, such as England or France or Holland or the Scandinavian countries. The rise of capitalism and the emergence of the bourgeoisie led in Germany as elsewhere to a confrontation with the feudal aristocracy; but in Germany, unlike in the other cases, the confrontation resulted in a victory for the old order. The defeat of the bourgeoisie set the pattern for the next century. While other countries trod the path from a pre-industrial economy, a hierarchical society and an authoritarian political system to an industrial economy, an open society and a parliamentary-democratic political system, Germany wandered off the path in 1848 and failed to return to it until placed there by force in 1945. Germany certainly acquired an industrial economy; but this was not accompanied by an open society

Kenneth D. Barkin, 'Germany's Path to Industrial Maturity', in D. K. Buse (ed.), Aspects of Imperial Germany, Laurentian Historical Review, 1978, p. 29

¹⁷ For one of the most succinct and influential collective statements of this whole thems, see Carola Stem and Heinrich Λ Winkler (eds.), Weakpookis destriber Geodecis 1243–1941, Frankfurt 1979, 25,000 copies of this book, which originated in a radio sense, had been printed by March 1980.

¹⁸ Barkin, ep cit

¹⁹ A J P Taylor, The Course of Gormon History, p 82

²⁰ Martin Kitchen, The Political Economy of Garmany 1815-1914, London 1978, p. 82.

²¹ Stem and Winkler, Washington, p. 9

²² Theodore S. Hamerow, Ratteration, Revolution, Reaction, Princeton 1958, p. vin

or a parliamentary-democratic political system. The dominant feature of Germany's political development in this period was the determination of the pre-industrial, feudal or semi-feudal anistocracy to retain power at all costs. To this determination more than to any other single factor can be attributed the unification of Germany from above, by Bismarck; the combination of democratic and constitutional forms with the authoritarian, arbitrary realities of the Bismarckian Empire; the entrenched irresponsibility of the Army; the pattern of foreign aggression, designed to draw the nation together and to frustrate the critics of the political order; the manipulation of the masses, above all of precapitalist groups such as the peasantry and the artisans, against democracy; and the political desperation of conservative groups in the Weimar Republic, when they put Hitler into the Chancellery in a last effort to recoup their losses with the support of what they imagined to be an easily manipulable mass movement of the far Right.

The increasing popularity of this view during the last two decades clearly owed something to the political and intellectual dominance of Social Democracy and liberalism in West Germany. The German Social Democrats dropped the remnants of the old Marxist-oriented ideology from their programme in 1959, entered government for the first time since the War in 1966, and stayed there until their liberal partners deserted them in 1982. During this period a new generation of 'socialliberal' historians came to the fore and established themselves in the academic world.²³ They generated a vast outpouring of historical research: much of it has been first-rate, and the scholarly validity of this work is unaffected by any political implications which it might have. Nevertheless, it is hard not to see the 'structural continuity' thesis to which these historians, with support from colleagues in Britain and the USA, to a greater or lesser degree adhere, as an attempt to give historical legitimacy to the liberal capitalist social and political order of the 1960s and 1970s in West Germany. On the one hand, the thesis inaugurated a new and more critical view of the German past, in sharp contrast to the apologetics of conservative German historians in the 1950s. On the other hand, it radically dissociated the German past from the West German present. The catastrophe of 1933 was ascribed not to capitalism but to the survival of feudal or pre-capitalist elites. If industrialists supported Hitler it was not because they were industrialists but because they were 'feudalized'. Nazism succeeded because capitalism failed in Germany to produce its 'normal' concomitants in the form of a liberal society and a parliamentary-democratic political system. Since 1945, however, West Germany has experienced capitalism restored to its essential qualities as the old elites were destroyed and the pre-capitalist sectors of society have shrunk to insignificance. All that remained in the 1960s and 1970s was to remove the last remnants of the 'premodern' order and to come to terms with the legacy of those peculiarities of the German past which had largely ceased to exist in 1945.

²⁹ For a good account of this process, see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, 'Historiography in Germany Today', in J. Haberman, ed., Observations on the Sparitual Situation of the Age, Cambridge, Mass. 1984.

The Neo-Marxist Critique

The 'structural continuity' thesis aroused bitter and sometimes violent opposition from conservative historians in West Germany. But for a number of reasons it was never subjected to a convincing critique from the Left. The capitalist system in post-1945 West Germany has its own peculiarities and most notable of these in the intellectual sphere has been the lack of an independent undogmatic tradition of Marxist historiography. The presence across the border of an entrenched Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy led West Germans to equate Marxism with Leninism and the threat of Soviet domination. The West German Communist Party remains insignificant in size compared to its French and Italian counterparts; more to the point, it has never succeeded in escaping from the dominance of the 'Marxist-Leninists' on the other side of the Wall. There is no 'Eurocommunism' in West Germany. Berufsperbot and other, more powerful informal modes of discrimination have made it difficult for avowed Marxists to obtain university posts in the Federal Republic. The influence of the Frankfurt School lived on in some departments of philosophy and sociology, but in general its ideas have not had the direct political relevance which inevitably attaches to interpretations of the German past. Only very recently has an explicitly Marxist historiography begun to emerge in West Germany; so far, however, it represents an assimilation of neo-Marxist historiography and theory from England, France and Italy rather than an independent development with its own particular roots.24

In any case, the 'structural continuity' thesis itself incorporated some Marxist concepts, and built in part on an existing tradition of dissident Marxist thinking about the origins of the 'Third Reich', exemplified in the writings of people like Ernst Bloch or August Thalheimer. As early as 1932, for example, Franz Borkenau argued that the ineffectiveness of the Weimar state made it abourd to explain Nazism in terms of the big bourgeoisie's need to defend its political power against the imminent threat of a proletarian revolution. All classes, in his view, were equally frustrated by the political paralysis of the Weimar Republic. Its weaknesses went deep into German history. In general, Borkenau asserted, 'fascism becomes a problem first, where democratic norms precede the development of modern capitalism; secondly, where for a long time they have lagged behind in relation to economic development', Germany being in his view an example of the second case.²⁵ The liberal-Social Democratic interpretation of German history was thus able to integrate the radicalism of the student generation of the 1960s into its own struggle against entrenched conservative views and helped to cut off the possibility of an alternative interpretation.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the first really serious neo-Marxist critique of the 'structural continuity' thesis has been launched from outside Germany, by two British historians, David Blackbourn and

²⁶ Thus a number of the works of Hill, Hobsbawm, Thompson and other 'Anglo-Marxist' historians have recently been translated into German, often many years after their first appearance in English ²⁵ For useful accounts of this tradition, see Pierre Aygoberry, The Nazy Quartess, New York 1981 (here, p. 59) and Martin Kitchen, Fascius, London 1976.

Geoff Eley, in a series of brilliant and thought-provoking articles published since the mid-1970s,26 in two major monographs, respectively on local politics and on nationalist pressure-groups on Wilhelmine Germany,²⁷ and in a jointly-authored book, published in German in 1980 under the title Mythen dentscher Geschichtsschreibung.28 Taken together, these works constitute a substantial intellectual achievement. The issues which the two historians ruise in their various publications are of crucial importance to our understanding not only of the structural origins of Nazism, but also of historical materialism itself. Blackbourn and Eley's intervention is remarkable for the sustained and cumulative development of their critique, starting with highly specific analyses of difficult empirical questions, building up through dissections of some of the central concepts with which historians have sought to elaborate the thesis of the structural peculiarities of German history, and culminating in an all-out attack on the thesis itself, delivered with considerable verve and parache. Not surprisingly, their arguments have aroused most controversy in the Federal Republic of Germany, where their most general critique of the structural continuity thesis was first published. Much of the debate around their intervention has taken place in learned periodicals or obscure journals published only in German. In this respect, indeed, it is an encouraging sign of the growth of international intellectual exchanges among progressive historians. But there has so far been little discussion of their work in English. This is true above all of their most recent, jointly authored book, which has now been published in an extended and revised edition by Oxford University Press under the title The Peculiarities of German History.* The book sums up and significantly extends their earlier work, and it is on the arguments presented in this particular study that I shall concentrate in this article. More than any of their previous work, it mounts an explicitly Marxist challenge to the thesis I have outlined above.

Blackbourn and Eley's critique falls into two parts, theoretical and empirical. The substance of their theoretical argument is that the 'structural continuity' thesis rests on an inadequate theory of the nature of bourgeois revolutions. It is inadequate for a number of reasons. First, Eley argues, it is theoretically eclectic, drawing on two mutually incompatible sources—Marxism and modernization theory. This eclecticism, he seems to imply, involves a distortion of the concept of 'bourgeois revolution' to mean simply the establishment of parliamentary democracy. Secondly, Eley asserts that a successful bourgeois revolution of the sort which, it is argued, failed to occur in Germany in 1848, never took place anywhere. The idea that the bourgeois revolution

²⁶ See particularly David Blackbourn, "The Mathitum in German Society and Politics, 1871–1914', Secal History vol. 2 (1977), No. 1, pp. 409–434, and 'Peasant and Politics in Germany, 1871–1914', European History Quarterly 14, (1984), pp. 47–75, Geoff Eley, 'Defining Social Imperation', Social History Vol. I (1976), No. 3, p. 265–290, 'Capitalism and the Wilhelmine State', The Historical Journal, vol. 11 (1970), No. 3, pp. 757–750, and 'What Produces Fascism Preindustrial Traditions of a Crisis of the Capitalist States', Politics and Society 12 (1983), 53–82

²⁷ David Blackbourn, Class, Ratigues and Lucal Putates in Wideliums Germany, London 1980, Geoff Eley, Rathepong the German Right, London 1980

²⁰ David Blackbourn, Geoff Eley, Mython doutscher Geschichtrachvolung die geschieferte bergerliche Revolution von 1848, Frankfurt 1980

^{*} D Blackbourn and G Eley, The Pecuharithm of Garman History, OUP 1984, £19 50 (hb) and £7 95 (pb)

was a single dramatic event such as happened in England in 1640 or in France in 1789 has been discredited in empirical historical research as well as in recent Marxist writing. Equally dubious, he suggests, is the assumption that a bourgeois revolution, however long it might take, is brought about by the bourgeoisie itself, acting according to its own interests and with full 'class consciousness' in direct opposition to the pre-industrial or feudal ruling class. Here again this view has been rendered untenable by detailed historical research in the classic cases of England and France, so it seems unreasonable to demand that it should hold good for the German case. A third questionable assumption is that the bourgeoisie, if fully class-conscious, is necessarily liberal in its political views. This involves the notion that ideologies have a specific class basis—for example, that liberal democracy is the ideology of the bourgeoisie, or anti-semitism of the petty bourgeoisie, or authoritarianism of the feudal aristocracy. Such an approach defines classes according to their form of consciousness (if a bourgeoisie is not liberal then it must be 'feudalized', i.e. not a true bourgeoisie). This reduces ideologies to the social position of their representatives. Finally, he argues, these historians have confused two separate things in their concept of the bourgeois revolution—on the one hand, the creation of a liberal parliamentary democracy, and on the other the creation of conditions under which the capitalist mode of production could develop unhindered. The concept 'bourgeois revolution' should, he states, be properly reserved for the latter, which is thus almost by definition a long-term process in no way brought about simply by the political actions of a class-conscious bourgeoisie. Finally, Eley suggests that there is no reason why a bourgeois revolution, as he defines it, should require a liberal or democratic political system to ensure its successful completion.

Blackbourn's theoretical points are more oriented towards problems of historical methodology. The German version of his essay entitled Wie es essentlub nucht gewesen turns Ranke's famous phrase on its head and argues that historians have spent too much time studying the German past 'as it really wasn't'. By this he means not only that historians have devoted too much attention to the alleged absence of a bourgeois revolution, but also that this obsession with Germany's failure to follow the assumed path of other nations to modernity has produced a whole variety of futile efforts to explain why there was no 'Gladstone coalition' in 19th-century Germany or to account for the small size of the pacifist movement or the 'backwardness' of German feminism.29 He notes that other authors, especially Anderson and Nairn, have advanced for England similar arguments to those made by the 'socio-liberal' historians for Germany; they also exist for Spain, and one attempt at least has been made to apply them to the whole of Europe. Marx and Engels, he points out, thought very little of the political abilities of the bourgeoisie not just in Germany, but everywhere in Europe. Finally, both authors argue that 'the Kaiserreich must be looked at on the basis

²⁰ He refers in this context to works such as Roger Chickering, *Importal Germany and a World Without* War, Princeton 1975, and my own The Featuret Management in Germany 1894–1933, London 1976

³⁸ Amo J Mayer, The Permission of the Old Regime, London 1981, a work which understands itself as 'Marxiet history from the top down' (shot, p.x.), see also contributions by Ronald France, Perry Anderson and Tom Naim in previous users of New Left Review

of its own conditions, not as the arena of an interplay of "pre-industrial continuities", nor as a simple curtain-raiser to the later Weimar period and the Third Reich.'

Having cleared away what, in their view, are the theoretical and methodological confusions of the 'structural continuity' thesis, Eley and Blackbourn then turn to developing their own notion of the 'bourgeois revolution'. Blackbourn argues that it is time to abandon the idea that bourgeois revolution necessarily involved 'an overt shift of power in favour of the bourgeoisie'. 'The bourgeoisie', he says, became the dominant if not the ruling class' in Europe not by a heroic conquest of power but by quieter, more subtle means. Its real strength lay in the success of the capitalist mode of production and was expressed in bourgeois predominance in civil society. This merits the term "bourgeois revolution" much more than a certain form of the state.' The type of state that functioned 'as guarantor of civil society' varied from country to country and cannot be explained by the triumph or otherwise of the bourgeoisie, but only by a wide variety of particular historical structures and circumstances. On the basis of these arguments, Eley and Blackbourn go on to deal with the argument, central to the 'structural continuity' thesis, that because of the failure of the 'bourgeois revolution' the German political parties were never able to unite, as they did in England, in broad coalitions of social forces in a way that would have constituted a far more effective pressure for parliamentarization than they were able in fact to provide (e.g. the 'Gladstone coalition'). Instead, they tended to be representatives of relatively narrow class interests; and there is a considerable literature on the problem of why the Social Democrats failed to extend their support significantly beyond the industrial proletariat, why, in Engels's phrase, the Prussian Junkers were 'incapable of providing the basis for a great independent party with a historical role in the life of the nation, as the English landowners are in fact doing', why the different Liberal parties failed to unite, and, more recently, why the Catholic Centre failed to join forces with other political parties until the 'Weimar Coalition' (once again, a subject on which Blackbourn, despite the fact that it is a 'negative question', has written illuminatingly and at length in his own book). Clearly this situation was not simply created by Bismarckian manipulation; it was also an aspect of the lack of national integration in a state structure that was only formed in 1871. Nor were the parties, limited though their social support may have been, merely representatives of economic interests, or merely supported by one class or fraction of a class—not to mention the very broad base of the Catholic Centre. Nevertheless, the adherents of the 'structural continuity' thesis commonly argue that the lack of ministerial responsibility and parliamentary power, added to the fragmentation of parties, led to a proliferation of economic and political pressure-groups which bypassed parties and dealt directly with the government. This development, it is claimed, led to even more irresponsibility in domestic and foreign politics and further retarded the emergence of a firm parliamentary system in which the political parties would have been elements of sufficient weight to dissuade people from supporting the fundamentally anti-parliamentary, anti-party-politics movement of National Socialism in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

One of the clearest lines of argument in Eley and Blackbourn's work is the attempt to reassert the importance of the political parties, though this comes somewhat surprisingly from Eley, who has so far devoted most of his scholarly work to the study of the nationalist pressuregroups. Blackbourn in particular argues that from 1890 or thereabouts a national political arena emerged, helped by the spread of railways and the rise of a nationally oriented press and communications network. It was on this arena that the political parties played out their rivalries, which played a dominant role in public political life in the two decades before the First World War. The bourgeoisie trod the political stage with all the confidence that its dominance of social and economic life had given it. Yet here it not only encountered rivals notably the political movement of the organized working class—but also fell foul of regional, religious and other divisions within itself, which, unimportant in the quietness of local social life, acquired a devastating power once they were brought out into the open. Thus it was on the political level that the unitary culture of the German bourgeoiste was fractured. At a social level, however, all the evidence, Blackbourn suggests, points towards a widespread embourgeoisement of cultural and social norms in late 19th-century Germany, not to a continued dominance of 'feudal' values.

Theoretical Problems

When this critique is added to all the other attacks that Blackbourn and Eley have launched against the 'structural continuity' thesis, it all amounts to a formidable indictment. Nevertheless, it is not without its own theoretical and empirical problems. These are present above all in the critique's relation to contemporary historiography, its relation to Marxist theory and its relation to historicist methodology.

In the first place, the two authors—but especially Eley—have not been very careful in their discussion of current historiography. Perhaps it was unwise of them to entitle the German version of their book Myths of German Historical Writing, for clearly no one would argue that what the scholars under discussion are engaged in is myth-making on the lines pursued by the pseudo-scholarship of the "Third Reich". More serious was the claim of the book to be a critique of myths of German historical writing. Many of the most important exponents of the 'structural continuity' thesis of German peculiarity have been, and are, not German at all. Hans-Ulrich Wehler has complained that Eley misrepresents the view of a minority of historians as a new orthodoxy, while Hans-Jürgen Puhle has charged in similar vein that Eley and Blackbourn have no sense for realistic proportions in regarding those they criticize as powerful representatives of the dominant doctrine in German historiography. In places Eley appears to recognize that the

Wehler, Historische Sernebeimundesst, op. est

²⁸ The sharpest attacks on Blackbourn and Eley's work have been Hams-Ulrich Wehler, ""Deutscher Sonderweg" oder allgemeine Probleme des westlichen Kapitalismus", Marker, 35 (1981), 5 pp. 477–487 (regreitably personal in tone), with replies in ideal 35 (1981), 7 pp. 757–60, Heinrich August Winkler, 'Der deutsche Sonderweg. Eine Nachlese', ideal. 35 (1981), 5 pp. 793–804, Hams-Jurgen Puble,

German historians whom he is attacking are a minority by referring to the 'Kehrites', a term coined by Wolfgang J. Mommsen. In writing about the origins of the First World War, Mommsen mentioned in 1973 'The "Kehrite" approach (if I may be allowed to coin a new phrase) which tends to explain developments in the political sphere as the outcome of the defensive strategies of the ruling classes against what may be called the process of democratization; at times this approach has rather strong Marxist undertones.'

Mommsen described this as a 'very influential' view, supported among others by Wehler, Böhme, Stegmann and (with reservations) Berghahn. Interestingly, he tried to distinguish it from a broader 'functionalstructural' approach (exemplified by Puhle, G. A. Ritter and G. Schmidt) which saw the launching of the First World War as an act of desperation by a chaotic governmental system under severe strain from new social forces and the advent of mass politics.33 Subsequently this distinction has been more or less abandoned, not least by Eley. I am inclined to agree with Hans-Jurgen Puhle that 'Kehrite' is not a very helpful label.34 It suggests that the historians in question are disciples of the radical-liberal historian Eckart Kehr, whose iconoclastic essays, written during the Weimar Republic, were collected and republished in the 1960s by Hans-Ulrich Wehler.35 Their intellectual debts are really much wider and more varied. Elev is certainly on safer ground when he refers to the 'Kehrites' than he is when he talks about 'the German historians', and it seems to me a matter of secondary importance whether one calls these historians Kehrites or 'social-liberal historians' as Wehler does, or the 'progressive wing' of German bourgeois historians as the East Germans tend to do. What is important is that the views discussed should not be generally attributed to the entire German historical profession, or even to a majority of it. It has to be recognized that these views are currently under fierce attack from conservative historians in the Federal Republic who wish to deny the peculiarities of Germany's historical development in order to resurrect the theory that Hitler's rise to power was an accident, more the consequence of his own unique genius than of any deeper-rooted forces in German history.36

Protracted Bourgeois Revolutions

A second theoretical problem of the critique appears in its relation to Marxist theory. How persuasive are the authors' claims that the term

^{&#}x27;Deutscher Sonderweg: Kontroverse um eine vermeintliche Legende', *Journal für Guschelde* 1981/4, pp 44–43, and Jurgen Kocka, 'Der "deutsche Sonderweg" in der Diskussion', *Gerana Stades* Rosses Vol V, No 3 (October 1982), pp 365–379

³³ W J Mommsen, 'Domestic Factors in German Foreign Policy before 1914', Control European History VI (1973), No. 1, pp. 3-43, here p. 8

Hans-Jurgen Puble, 'Der Legende von der "Kehrschen Schule' ", Guscheite und Genellschaft Vol. 4 (1978), pp. 103-119. In other pounts, however, Puble's article seems to me more open to criticism.
 Eckart Kehr, Economic Interitt, Militarium and Ferregu Policy, Berkeley 1977.

²⁶ The account of the histomography of modern Germany is considerably more careful in the English edition than in the German. In particular there is an extended consideration of the role of German sociologists who emigrated to the USA in the 1950s and whose influence was particularly felt in West Germany in the 1960s. For further considerations on this point, see my easay "The Sociological Interpretation of German Labour History" in Richard J. Evans (ed.), The German Working Char 1868–1933, London 1982.

'bourgeois revolution' should refer solely to the triumph of the capitalist mode of production? Marx and Engels certainly used the term 'bourgeois revolution' to encompass both the change in relations of production which brought the bourgeoisie to a position where it displaced the feudal anstocracy as the dominant owner of property and labour power; and the consequent political changes by which the bourgeoisie secured the adaptation of 'superstructural' elements to conform more closely to its interests (e.g. the abolition of guilds, the establishment of a free market in property, the removal of restrictions on the labour supply such as serfdom, the ending of mercantilist restrictions on trade and manufacture, the creation of a political system that would be responsive to its needs; and so on). There is no doubt that they considered it necessary for the bourgeoisie, defined in its broadest sense, to act in some degree as the agent of the latter process, though usually in alliance with other classes. But it could, in Marx and Engels's view, bring it about by various means. The classic examples to which they referred were the English Revolution of 1640 and the French of 1789, but neither of these, in their view, resulted in a purely bourgeois political régime; nor were these revolutions anything more than the most crucial and decisive of a series of such events. Thus in England the changes of 1640-60 and 1688 were said to have produced a 'permanent alliance between the bourgeoisie and the greater part of the large landowners', which was further changed by the events of 1830-32. In France the events of 1789 were only the beginning of a long period, marked by subsequent upheavals in 1793-4, 1799-1801, 1815, 1830, and 1848-51, in which political structures underwent dramatic changes. At times—notably under the Second Empire—the French bourgeoisie indeed surrendered political power, previously exercised through parliament, to an autonomous state bureaucracy and a despotic leader, in order to maintain its position in the face of the proletarian threat. Neither in England nor in France, however, did these upheavals and shifting class alliances within the political sphere alter the fundamental fact that a transition to capitalism, accompanied by such changes in the 'superstructure' that were necessary to remove serious obstacles to the transformation of the relations of production, had begun long before the period in question, had reached its decisive point respectively in 1640 and 1789, and was continuing to be refined and completed throughout the following decades.

Since Germany was one of the major industrial nations of the world by 1914, it is obvious enough that according to these criteria the transition from feudal to capitalist relations of production had taken place; and it should not be necessary to review the economic history of 19th-century Germany in detail to point out that, since it had also been accompanied by a whole range of changes in the 'superstructure', from the emancipation of the serfs through the abolition of guilds and the creation of internal free trade, a bourgeois revolution had indeed taken place. There were indeed some revivals of feudal forms in this sphere, such as the renewal of guilds in the 1850s, but no one has seriously suggested that these posed a real obstacle to further capitalist development. Equally, however, while these general, long-term trends constituted the triumph of the bourgeois revolution in the overall context of German society, the precise nature of the political, institutional and ideological

elements of the 'superstructure', and of the class distribution of political power, remains a subject for more detailed investigation. It was, as Eley points out, the outcome of specific political struggles, which can only be explained by empirical research.

It also follows from the account given above, however, that the bourgeoisie in Germany could easily have surrendered political power. or shared it, provided that this did not damage its dominance of property relations. This in fact is what Marx and Engels tended to believe happened. In The Role of Force in History, Engels argued that the Revolution of 1848 secured the bourgeoisie a 'modest share' in political power, which it used to help speed up the development of capitalism. Further economic growth became inhibited by the political and legal particularism of Germany. However, 'large-scale industry, and with it the bourgeoisie and the proletanat, developed in Germany at a time when, almost simultaneously with the bourgeoisie, the proletariat was able to appear independently on the political stage, and when, consequently, the struggle between the two classes had begun before the bourgeoisie had acquired either exclusive or predominant political power.' To have acquired such power, Engels maintained, would have been the only way 'to eliminate the numerous relics left over from the days of decaying feudalism, which permeated legislation and administration. Only in this way was it possible to transplant the full results of the great French Revolution in Germany; to put an end to the whole antiquated condition of Germany; to take the road of modern development consciously and definitively, and to adapt her political to her industrial condition.' The equilibrium of proletariat and bourgeoisie, however, gave unusual freedom to the state, which was enhanced by the fact that 'neither Junkers nor bourgeois possessed even the average amount of energy', the bourgeoisie in particular being afraid of 'the menace of the advancing working class' and 'tractable by its whole previous history'. Thus Bismarck satisfied the economic needs of the bourgeoisie by unifying Germany and introducing certain legislative reforms, mainly affecting economic life, but denied their political aspirations in so far as they still had any.37

These views were in some ways developing Marx's earlier argument about the virtually simultaneous emergence of the bourgeoisie and proletariat in Germany and its consequence, the political timidity of the bourgeoisie, advanced in his introduction to the Critique of High!'s Philosophy of Right (1844). Arguments about the historic weakness of the German bourgeoisie, therefore, seem to have their origin in the work of Marx and Engels themselves, not in any 'theoretical eclecticism'. Engels's account of course has its own problems: it elevates Bismarck, for example, even more than conventional histories do, by making him into the supreme manipulator of German history, miraculously aware of what the true interests of bourgeoisie and aristocracy were and implementing them against the wishes of both. At least, however, it represents a consistent attempt to link the political and the economic. As Eley recognizes in the English edition of his essay, the

³⁷ Friedrich Engels, The Rate of Force in History, London 1968, pp 31, 95-7, 101, 104-6

³⁸ Michael Lowy, The Politics of Combined and Union Divisionment, London 1981, pp. 10-11

definition of 'bourgeois revolution' which he adopts leaves unsolved 'the fundamental difficulty of relating specific political events like the English or French Revolution to the longer-run processes of social change that are thought to precede, inform and largely determine them . . . To the extent that the stress on "bourgeois revolution in the epochal sense" involves a retreat from the problem of causality', he admits, 'it amounts to an important weakness.' The problem is, of course, that this weakness is as present in relation to the 1848 Revolution in Germany and the political weakness of German liberalism as it is in relation to the history of England and France.

A Revival of Historicism?

A third theoretical difficulty of the critique lies in its historicist tendencies, which are, as much as anything else, perhaps, responsible for the welcome which it has received from German conservatives. The German edition of The Peculiarities of German History was widely regarded as a revival of 'Historismus', a specifically German theory of history and its study, according to which (among other things) a historical period can only be studied in its own terms, and may not be assessed according to external criteria; in Ranke's phrase, every era was 'immediate to God'. The implication, of course, is that the concept of historical continuity is inadmissible. Moreover, the school of Historiswas, which dominated German historiography well into the 20th century, also argued that political institutions were nationally specific, and that parliamentarism, for example, could not be imported into Germany—a reminder that the thesis of the peculiarities of the Germans was in fact first developed by 19th- and early 20th-century Germanconservatives, and what the 'social-liberal' historians have done is simply stand it on its head.39 Thus comparative history was ruled out by the Rankeans. Eley's critique of modernization theory and various concepts drawn from the social sciences was seen to have a parallel in the fact that Historismus involved a sharp rejection of explicit theorizing and conceptualization. Finally, reviewers detected a strong resemblance between Eley's critique and that advanced by Thomas Nipperdey, who has explicitly acknowledged his indebtedness to the tradition of Histo-TISMUS.40

Now, I for one cannot believe that Eley and Blackbourn have been directly influenced by a reading of Ranke or the tradition of Historismus, both of which are rather remote from the world of present-day British historiography. I prefer to think that their stance is a consequence of the current situation of Western Marxism. Stalinism posited a logical development of human history, governed by ineluctable laws, leading up to the (Stalinist) present or near future. Thus in its version of Russian history everything that contributed to the Stalinist present was labelled 'progressive', everything that delayed its arrival 'reactionary', and history was written as a struggle between progressive and reactionary forces; periodically, as Stalin's policies (and those of his successors)

³⁶ This is explicitly recognized in the English edition of The Pseuharities of German History

Thomas Nipperdey, 'Wehlers "Kasserresch". Eine kritische Auseinsindersetzung', Geschichte und Gesellschaft Vol. 1 (1975), pp. 539–560

changed, it was rewritten and the labels redistributed. This led to the kind of teleological distortions so chillingly caricatured in Orwell's 1984. Western Marxism has understandably been concerned to get away from this approach. For British historians the 'Whig interpretation', in which the national history was written in similarly teleological terms as one of progress towards parliamentarianism, with everything in the past assessed in the light of its contribution to this progress, and bouquets and brickbats doled out accordingly, constitutes another influence that has to be discarded. The problem is, how are we to escape teleology without falling into historicism? How are we to argue against the assessment of the past in terms of the present without arguing that it has to be understood purely in its own terms?

There can be no denying that the German edition of Blackbourn and Eley's book did not really solve this problem. At a number of points it did indeed take up what appeared to be a historicist position, by suggesting that historians should avoid asking counterfactual questions, and by denying the legitimacy of problems such as 'why wasn't Germany England? The English version of the book, however, is rather more satisfactory in these respects. In their joint introduction, they go out of their way to rebut the accusations of historicism, while reaffirming their intention 'to try and restore a sense of contingencyalthough not of accident—to modern German history' (a distinction which, however, is not further explained). The comparison between Germany and England—the question 'why was there no Gladstone coalition in Germany?'—permeates the new version as it did the old, but this time it is buttressed by a much more careful and nuanced set of arguments about the perils of comparative history. The authors no longer appear to deny its legitimacy; rather, they are content to point out that historians have too easily accepted the uniqueness of the German experience, and that the contrast with similar arguments about the failure, or at least only partial success, of the English bourgeois revolution advanced some time ago by Anderson and Nairn suggests that careful empirical research is needed before the real areas of difference can be properly delineated. In this they are surely right.

Feudalization of the Bourgeoisie

The long tradition of the Marxist thesis of the political weakness of the German bourgeoisie and its frequent recourse to strong state action to protect its interests has been able, theoretically and empirically, to include as a conditioning factor the notion of feudal survivals at the political level. There is no reason either in theory or in practice to deny the existence of continuities of social attitudes and institutions or political values and ideologies from the age of Prussian Absolutism in the 18th century up to the parliamentary democracy of the Weimar Republic. What is at issue, surely, is the interpretative weight that should be placed on these continuities. The real problem with recent work on German history is that much of it has enlarged the weight of these 'feudal' continuities beyond the bounds of usefulness or plausibility, until they have come to dominate the whole explanatory procedure. The most significant achievement of the two authors has been their attack on this explanatory inflation of the concept of feudal (or 'pre-

industrial' or 'pre-modern') survivals in 20th-century German society and politics. In recent work, the attribution of epithets such as 'feudal' and 'bourgeois' to certain values has threatened to take on an absolute character cut off entirely from the classes and productive relations which determined their formation. It may seem politically useful to describe the values of the late 20th-century British Establishment 2s 'feudal'41, for example, but such labelling robs the concepts of their historicity and turns them into timeless terms of abuse.

Nevertheless, there are certain key pieces of empirical evidence which historians have long used to support the thesis of the dominance of feudal social values as well as authoritarian political structures in Imperial Germany. In the English version of the book, David Blackbourn devotes some attention to the notorious Prussian Junkers. Was the landowning class, as Engels maintained, feudal right up to the late 19th century? Engels justified his use of the term with the argument that the Junkers' continued dominance of local and provincial government ensured that rural labourers 'remained in their previous state of de facto serfdom'. 42 But there are problems with this assertion. Empirical studies of the Junkers have long since established that in economic terms they had become a class of capitalist farmers by the mid-19th century, following on the emancipation of the serfs and the growth of the sugar-beet (and later the distilling) industry. There was a free market in land and free mobility of labour. The draconian and restrictive terms of the Gesindeordnung, which formally placed the labourers in a kind of serfdom, were in many respects inoperative, and could not disguise the fact that the relationship between Junker and Gesinde was a wage nexus and that the Junkers produced, as they had done for many years, for a national, even an international market. Nor could they prevent labourers deserting on wasse for the towns when industry became sufficiently developed to exert a significant demand in the national labour market. Besides, in what ways can the values and attitudes of the Junkers be meaningfully described as 'feudal'? These were middling capitalist farmers with a predominantly Calvinist ethic and a sharp eye for profits. Prussian landowners had no hesitation about becoming industrial entrepreneurs if the opportunity grose, whether through the discovery of mineral reserves on their land or through a rise in world demand for potato schnapps. It is also analytically important to distinguish between landowners as a class and the aristocracy as a status group. The Prussian Kings were not slow to ennoble successful industrialists or senior civil servants, but such people no more became feudal than do their counterparts in Britain today, especially since, as Blackbourn points out, the sale of titles was a well-known source of government income in 19th-century Prussia. (One should add, however, that this was confined to specifically bourgeois titles such as 'commercial councillor'.) In all these respects it is more precise to talk of the Junkers as the landowning fraction of the bourgeoisie by the late 19th century than it is to base an entire historical interpretation on the existence of a mythical 'feudal aristocracy'. Blackbourn's arguments in this respect are an important corrective to older views.

⁴¹ James Bellini, Rah Britanna, London 1981

⁴² Engels, The Rak of Force in History, loc at

The State and Industrialization

Another important piece in the mosaic of empirical evidence offered in support of the thesis of a missing bourgeois revolution is the late arrival of the German bourgeoisie on the historical scene. Blackbourn attempts to overcome this by suggesting of the early 19th century that the 'economically progressive bureaucracy served almost as a kind of surrogate bourgeoisie'. However, the idea of the state as the handmaiden of industry has long been questioned by economic historians. Many would argue that it was not until the state withdrew from the economy in the 1830s and 1840s that the industrial revolution in Germany could get under way. It is striking that most of Blackbourn's examples of allegedly successful state involvement, such as craftsmen's schools. industrial exhibitions and state-run railways, are drawn from states such as Baden, Bavaria and Hesse, which industrialized less rapidly and less successfully than Prussia. In this, the largest of the German states, the bureaucracy was lukewarm about railway building and similar projects, and industrialization took place, some historians would argue, partly in the face of considerable opposition from the state, partly as a consequence of the dismantling of state economic enterprises such as the Subandlung and the removal of guild restrictions and similar stateguaranteed privileges. The idea of the archetypal bureaucracy, that of Prussia, acting as a surrogate bourgeoisie also tends to reinforce the traditional picture of the German bourgeoisie as lacking in initiative, in this case economic as well as political.

It is often argued that when an industrial and professional bourgeoisie did arrive on the German social scene in sufficient numbers to make its weight felt, it was imbued in many ways with a 'feudal' social consciousness. In support of this assertion, historians frequently cite the power of the Junker-dominated officer corps in Prussian society. Successful business and professional men often aspired to become officers of the reserve, but they could only do so if they adopted the feudal code of honour, with its rejection of political liberalism and its recourse to the duel whenever it was slighted.⁴³ That many joined the officer corps despite, rather than because of its 'Junker' qualities—an assertion for which Blackbourn offers no empirical evidence—did not make much odds: the point was, they joined it. If young bourgeois aspirants managed to retain their liberal convictions, it was as often as not because some accident of fate held them back from entering this world—as with Theodor Heuss, who was prevented by chance from following his brothers into a duelling corps at Tubingen University, and subsequently became a leading left-wing liberal. (Blackbourn's account of this episode seems to me to miss the point, which is that had Heuss actually joined the duelling corps, he might well have lost the bourgeois values he had imbibed from his family and school.) Of course, Catholics like Adolf Grober opposed duelling on religious grounds, and South German towns sometimes also disapproved of it as a Prussian' custom. The fact remains, however, that duelling continued to be practised on quite a substantial scale in Protestant Prussia, not only among students but also among army officers, officers of the

⁴³ Martin Kitchen, The German Officer Corps 1894-1918, Oxford 1968

reserve, civilian aristocrats and impeccably bourgeois professionals such as doctors, dentists and apothecaries, well into the 20th century. The contrast with England, where duelling effectively died out in the middle of the 19th century, remains to be explained. Blackbourn is on safer ground when he charts the decline of the aristocratic component in the officer corps and its gradual confinement to a few socially prestigious regiments like the Guards, a process which had obvious English parallels. Nevertheless, one cannot help feeling that he does not in the end deal very successfully with this particular area of the debate, and the point he is making has still to be proven.

Not only do the two authors argue that the bourgeoisie was not feudalized; Blackbourn in particular turns the tables and suggests that there was a general embourgeousement of social mores in nineteenthcentury Germany. The public park and gallery came to rival the aristocratic park and gallery. Princely menagenes gave way to bourgeois zoos (Blackbourn's obsession with zoos delivers some of the most entertaining passages in the book). Opera lovers internalized the bourgeois value of deferred gratification and started clapping at the end of the whole performance instead of after every aria. Sumptuary regulations were relaxed and the bourgeois uniform of the top hat and frock coat was worn even by aristocrats as they abandoned breeches and stockings. Travel was democratized by the railway, and the princely carriage became an object of scorn. This embourgeoisement of Germany created a culturally and socially homogeneous bourgeois society, with rules to which the aristocrats subscribed just as much as their social inferiors. Thus the bourgeoisie in a socio-cultural sense was not weak and divided, but strong and united.

This thesis is undeniably a very attractive one. Not the least of its incidental virtues is the way in which it demonstrates the relevance of the social history of everyday life to wider historical arguments centring on the explicitly political. But the argument is advanced over notoriously difficult terrain. A long and inconclusive debate within Marxism on the extent to which culture in this sense is socially determined, stretching from the German Social Democrats of the 1890s through to the socialist realists of Stalin's era and beyond, has revealed little more than the danger of deducing class values and positions from artistic and cultural artefacts or attitudes. Blackbourn generally assumes, or vaguely implies, that certain cultural phenomena were 'bourgeois' without actually attempting any definition of why we should consider them bourgeois rather than something else. His argument here strikes me as bearing certain similarities to the suggestive but unsatisfactory attempt of Amo Mayer to use cultural and artistic evidence to demonstrate a very different thesis—the dominance of aristocratic values in the same period.⁴⁵ Moreover, nearly all the examples cited by Blackbourn in support of his thesis are open to one kind of objection or another. Hagenbeck's Zoo was as unusual in its way as Wagner's Bayreuth; private rather than municipal, open rather than caged, as much scientific

⁴⁴ Donna T. Andrew, "The Code of Honour and its Critics. The Opposition to Duelling in England 1700–1850", Sacial Hittery, Vol. 5 (1980), No. 3, pp. 409–434.

⁴⁶ Mayer, Parastones of the Old Raganes, op cet

as entertaining, it marked a far clearer break with the noble menagerie than did the conventional zoo. Moreover, whatever the rules which Wagner might have enforced at Bayreuth, audiences at conventional operas continued to applaud at the end of arias, as they do today; I recall an opera performance in London in 1964 or 1965 where some arias were repeated two or even three times in response to audience demand before the action moved on. The spread of the frock-coat was paralleled by a growing elaboration of court, military and ceremonial dress. Archaic modes of transport, as David Cannadine has recently reminded us, came to inspire awe more than ridicule.46 Aristocratic patronage continued (as Arno J. Mayer is at pains to point out) to play an important role in the arts well beyond the turn of the century. Wagner, who owed almost everything to the patronage of King Ludwig II of Bavaria, was a prime example. One could go on. Clearly this is an area which needs not only sharper conceptualization but also more empirical research. One could do worse than begin by asking why the great novels of bourgeois life, so prominent in English and French culture in the 19th century, had no real counterpart in Germany, with the occasional, almost unique, exception such as Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks.

More central to the argument than zoos and operas, perhaps, is the thesis that German industrial magnates behaved in a feudal manner. The assertion that 'a German employer regarded himself as a patriarch, as the master in his own house in pre-industrial terms' has been accorded a central place in the empirical underpinning of the thesis that the German bourgeoisie was 'feudalized'. Eley and Blackbourn are both anxious to refute this hypothesis. It is clear that substantial sections of the German bourgeoisie were highly critical of such attitudes and gave considerable support, for example, to the strikes of 1905-6. Many big German employers did indeed combine social welfare measures for their workers with a harsh policy of lock-outs, blacklisting and the sponsorship of 'yellow' company unions, all tactics aimed at cementing the loyalty of the worker to his employer and preventing the spread of collective wage agreements. But these were overwhelmingly very large employers, whose ability to engage in such policies rested on the heavy concentration of capital in certain sectors, above all metalwork, mining, the chemical and electrical industries, and some big engineering enterprises. Paternalist measures were initiated more by managers or second-generation employers than by the original entrepreneurs. They were introduced above all after the major strikes of 1904-06, and in periods of high labour turnover, acute labour shortage and increasing trade union power. Similar methods were used at about the same period by employers such as Carnegie in the United States and were also widespread in Britain and France. Collective wage agreements were certainly far more common in Britain than in Germany; in 1910, they covered 900,000 coalminers in the UK and only 82 (eighty-two) in the whole of Germany. But most of this difference can be explained by the higher capital intensity and cartellization of German industry. What

⁴⁶ David Canasdine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Rittal The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c 1820–1977, in Enc Hobshawm, Terence Ranger (eds.), The Invention of Tradition, London 1983, pp. 101–165

remains is the fact that since mid-century the British labour movement had been moderately reformist—which encouraged employers to put their trust in 'orderly' collective bargaining agreements arrived at with 'sensible' union leaders—while the German labour movement, with its close ties between the unions and the strongly Marxist spp, was much more frightening to the employers. There is thus no reason to look for the 'feudalization of the bourgeoisie' or the transference of cultural values from the feudal aristocracy to the big bourgeoisie as the key to the policies and attitudes of German capital. These are attributable mainly to capitalist rationality and opportunity, but also to the given political structures which were themselves the result of earlier historical developments. Teley and Blackbourn's arguments in this area are much more convincing, and deserve general support.

Economy, Politics and the Law

Eley and Blackbourn go on to suggest, in an argument that is given considerably more weight and emphasis in the English edition of their book, that the cultural unity and economic success of the German bourgeoisie made the conquest of state power unnecessary: indeed, when the bourgeoisie actually did tread the political stage, it rapidly became divided and lost the unity it possessed at the socio-cultural level. This is an ingenious and provocative argument, but despite the refinements which the authors have added since they first advanced it in 1980, it is still open to a number of objections. To start with, anyone who has read a 19th-century German manual of social etiquette, or who recalls the extraordinary proliferation of titles among the German bourgeoisie, for example, will be aware of the fact that social hierarchies and barriers seem to have been elaborate and sharply defined in this social class, perhaps even more so than among its English or French counterpart. Religion, which Blackbourn asserts was primarily a political division, was surely in reality one of the fundamental social forces dividing the bourgeoisie, as it did other classes as well. Such divisions were obvious enough in the small towns and larger urban centres of Wilhelmine Germany, and it did not need political rivalries to bring them out into the open. On the contrary, insofar as the national political arena was the scene of the rise of the SPD, it could actually serve to bring the bourgeois groups together. Nationalism, Blackbourn argues, 'was more of a consensus than an issue, in the bourgeois notable politics of mid-century'. This is a strange verdict on the violent quarrels that tore the mid-century bourgeoisie apart over issues such as states' rights and particularism, kleindentsch versus grossdentsch versions of German unity, and scores of lesser matters. Whatever else the national issue was, it was not above politics even in the heyday of nationalist triumph in the 1870s.

Capitalism's success may at times have displaced class antagonisms from the point of production to the political sphere. But capitalism did not

⁴⁷ See Geoff Eley, 'Capitalism and the Wilhelmine State', etc. at., Dick Geary, 'Employer Policies towards Labour in the Kaiserreich, 1871–1914', (1883) Research Seminar on Modern German Social History, unpublished paper, University of East Anglia, 1981) and David F. Crew, Turn in the Rubr. A Social History of Bachem 1860–1914, New York 1977

look very successful in the mid-1870s, when the break between liberalism and Social Democracy was decisively concluded. The restrictions which were placed on trade union organization at plant levelblack-lists, yellow company unions, tied housing and so on—were only successfully imposed decades later, above all in the years after 1905. Moreover, curiously enough for two historians who elsewhere have rightly stressed the need to look at German politics away from the centre as well as in Berlin, Eley and Blackbourn's talk of the displacement of class antagonisms into the political sphere is all based on the assumption that the political sphere was a nationwide entity. For them, 'politics' is implicitly 'national politics'. Yet this ignores one of the really crucial differences between the political system of the German Empire and those of England and France, namely the fact that Imperial Germany was a federal state, in which whole areas of political decisionmaking were controlled by the federated states, from education and religious affairs to policing, law and order and health services. The federated states alone could levy direct taxes and were charged with the collection of federal tolls and postage dues. In their hands lay the area of civil liberties. Each of the states had an elected legislative assembly which debated these matters, though its power to influence them was usually limited, and varied from state to state. If one looks carefully at the debates of these legislative assemblies, and at the government files of the federated states, it soon becomes clear that economic and social conflicts were more often resolved here than displaced onto political quarrels at the national level. The national political arena was occupied by demagogy and rhetoric precisely because so many political issues vital to the interests of capital and labour were resolved at the level of the federated states.

It has long been a favourite argument of conservative historians that the German political system would have evolved peacefully along British lines, towards parliamentary democracy, had it not been for the chance disaster of the First World War and its unfortunate consequence, the November Revolution of 1919. In support of it, they argue that Imperial Germany was 'de facto' becoming 'parliamentarized' before 1914. David Blackbourn is at pains to emphasize that he does not intend to resurrect the de facto parliamentarization argument. Geoff Eley, on the other hand, boldly states that there was a 'de facto existing parliamentary system' before 1914. He defines this in a footnote as 'a limited practical stabilization of public life within the available forms of Wilhelmine constitutionalism'. But this is not what historians usually mean by 'parliamentarization', and to talk of 'Wilhelmine constitutionalism' offers a further hostage to conservative historians whose argument that Wilhelm II's Germany was a constitutional monarchy is explicitly rebutted elsewhere in the book. Blackbourn, too, argues that the importance of the Reichstag and especially its committees and of nationally organized political parties in the decision-making process was becoming steadily greater between 1890 and 1914, and that this had a 'cumulative effect'. Both authors accept, however, that there was a continuity of authoritarian, undemocratic or illiberal political structures in Germany from 1848 at least up to 1918, including the executive's freedom from parliamentary control, the irresponsible position of the Kaiser, the checks on popular participation in government, the

entrenched privileges of the Army, and so on. On a European scale, there was nothing very unusual or archaic about these features of the Imperial German constitution. Yet this is hardly the point, for it is the comparison with *England* that remains central.

The major problem that the two historians face in confronting the 'dentscher Sonderweg' thesis is the failure of German liberals to form a large and united political party akin to the French Radicals or the English Liberals, and to win the support of the German working class. As they quite rightly point out, a careful distinction must be made between liberalism and democracy. For most of the 19th and early 20th centuries the majority of liberals in England as in Germany opposed democracy and supported a limited representative system on the basis of a property-qualified franchise of a highly restrictive kind. It was indeed the realization that liberal parties depended for their electoral support on the propertied elements of the population that persuaded Bismarck to introduce universal manhood suffrage, in the misguided hope of mobilizing what he imagined to be the loyal and conservative lower classes in support of his régime. Eley points out that liberal political movements and ideas were not 'bourgeois' but were supported by a variety of social forces, varying at one time and another from artisans and small producers to East Prussian landowners, and that they cannot be ascribed to the bourgeoisie alone. Finally, he notes that liberal ideas varied from time to time and from country to country, a fact which makes it unhistorical to demand of 19th-century German liberals that they conform to democratic standards.

There are a number of problems about these assertions. To begin with, while Eley is adamant that liberalism is historically variable and must be assessed in its context, he is quite prepared to employ rigid and unvarying criteria when it comes to judging the existence of democracy. These criteria include, for example, universal fomals as well as manhood suffrage, something which remained exceptional in Europe until 1945, and was supported only by a small minority of radical liberals and socialists in most countries before 1914. According to these criteria not even the urban artisanate and petty bourgeoisie whom Eley regards as the main supporters of democracy in the mid-19th century were democratically inclined. On the other hand, as Hans-Jürgen Puhle has pointed out, the men of the Frankfurt Assembly in 1848 were famous for their espousal of radical, theoretical liberal principles which made them perhaps more democratic, if also less realistic, than most of their liberal contemporaries.

Moreoever, it is arguable that there was a connection between liberalism and democracy. By supporting parliamentary rule, liberals in many countries helped willy-nilly to create the possibility of extending the franchise by Act of Parliament, while such extensions could be more easily resisted in states without ministerial responsibility; and they contributed towards increasing the electoral pressures in favour of suffrage reform. Once a parliamentary majority became the basis for government, the competition between rival parliamentary groups or parties for electoral support created a built-in pressure for the extension of the franchise. Thus, as the experience of Britain or the Scandinavian

countries seems to indicate, parliamentarism tended to lead to universal manhood suffrage. The process was clearly very complex and long-drawn-out. It certainly did not occur because liberals intended there to be universal suffrage all along. Nor was it, of course, the only means by which the franchise was extended, as the case of Bismarck indicates. Arguably, nevertheless, parliamentary rule favoured the realization of popular democratic aspirations. This would have been denied by those who fought for it in mid-19th-century Germany, Sweden or Denmark. By about 1890, however, this implication was clear enough, and it is worth bearing in mind Peter-Christian Witt's contention that in the industrial age, with a large working class, parliamentary rule was impossible without democratization, which is one reason why so few middle-class Germans were enthusiastic enough about it to support a large liberal party.⁴⁸

Finally, a problematical position in the argument is occupied by the law. Blackbourn devotes a good deal of space to maintaining that German law was gradually converted in the 19th century to conform with bourgeois legal ideology. Law, indeed, was one of the major areas of social and cultural embourgeoisement in the 19th century. To some extent this is a matter of emphasis. Where Engels, for example, accentuates the way in which the feudal reality of social relations on the land continued more or less unaffected by the veneer of bourgeois law imposed in the 1870s and 1880s, Blackbourn lays greater stress on the way in which the law was amended in a more general sense to conform to the requirements of capitalist reproduction in industry as well as on the land. Obviously since German capitalism reproduced itself with remarkable success in this period, German law must by definition have been amended in this manner. Still, this leaves some awkward problems. Blackbourn generally tends to overweight the conformity of German law to classic bourgeois principles. He stresses the guarantee of basic rights of assembly and association, for instance, in the Reichsversinsgenetz of 1908 (itself passed remarkably late in the history of the Empire: up to then these rights had been governed by the federated states). But while the Reschsvereusgesetz did give the rights of assembly and association to women (previously denied them in Prussia), it took them away from young people and linguistic minorities.

Again, Blackbourn argues that the principle of equality of citizens before the law was well established in Germany by the early 19th century, to be translated into practice by the emancipation of the Jews, the abolition of seigneurial jurisdictions and other reforms in succeeding decades. In some respects, however, it was never fully achieved. Duelling, once more, is a prime example of an offence which, because it was committed by the upper classes in defence of their honour, was never accorded more than token punishment save in the most exceptional circumstances. Whole classes of citizens such as prostitutes were denied basic civil liberties, even the right to go to the opera or visit a

Peter-Christian Witt, reviewing Manfred Rauh, Die Parlamentermer der deutschen Reicht, Dusseldorf 1977, in Multiergeschächtliche Mitteilungen 1/81, Vol. 19, pp. 196–202. Witt's review is a devastating attack on a conservative historian's attempt to revive the 'parliamentarization' thesis.

zoo.⁴⁹. The police could make laws and regulations without any real possibility of redress or appeal through the courts—in many ways they were indeed a law unto themselves. German labour law was notoriously biased against the employee, far more so than its English counterpart. The Civil Code which came into effect in 1900 was not the apotheosis of bourgeois individualism which conservative critics made it out to be. Blackbourn argues that Germany was a Rechtsstaat without making it clear that the German concept of Rechtistaat did not necessarily mean a state bounded by the rule of law but rather a state which agreed of its own free will to justify its actions in legal terms. The state remained the sole source of law in this doctrine. It was precisely because German criminal law did not allow the citizen adequate means of redress that industrial employers found it so easy to prevent the advance of collective bargaining. 50 Once again, as with the question of cultural values, so with the law: what is 'bourgeois' is capable of many different definitions, and is by no means as obvious as Blackbourn seems to think.

Origins of the Third Reich

What, then, were the real peculiarities of German history? In Blackbourn and Eley's view, 'the German experience constituted a heightened version of what occurred elsewhere'. All countries, as Blackbourn remarks, are peculiar, but some are more peculiar than others. Germany's capitalism was exceptionally dynamic and successful; Germany's bourgeoisie got the economic prosperity and class domination it wanted without having to fight for it in the political sphere. The threat from below, in the shape of the world's largest and most highly organized socialist party, the SPD, and other less obvious sources of political instability, such as peasant populism and the radical politics of sections of the petty bourgeoisie, placed a premium on a strong state. This closed off certain avenues of reform, including the creation of a full parliamentary democracy. It encouraged, on the one hand, an increasing bourgeois emphasis on administrative means of lessening class antagonisms (e.g., by municipal reform) and, on the other, a growing recourse to the demagogic rhetoric of racism and nationalism in an attempt to harness the discontents of the working class and the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, these efforts to control the antagonisms which emerged in the political arena were counterpointed at this level by the exposure, indeed the magnification, of the political divisions of capital. Such divisions effectively undermined attempts at liberal reform.

These developments, argue the two authors, continued in an ever more extreme form after the First World War. The Revolution of 1918 and the Weimar Republic brought with them the participation of the SPD in government and the creation of an elaborate system of social welfare.

^{**} See my 'Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany', Past and Present, 70 (February 1976), pp 106-29, for this particular example

²⁶ For these points, see Georg Jellinek, Allgaman Staatrachtshore, 3rd ed., Berlin 1922, Klaus Saul, 'Der Staat und die "Machte des Umsturzes", Archer für Sexualgeschichte XII (1972), pp. 193–350, and Klaus Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbergung im Kaiserreich, Dusseldorf 1974

The drastic economic rationalization that took place after the inflation of 1923 created an even more modern and efficient capitalist industrial system at the cost of permanent high unemployment and further alienation of the petty bourgeoisie. All these features of the Weimar years were accentuated yet again by the crash of 1929 and the following depression, more severe in Germany than almost anywhere else. The SPD blocked the attempt to dismantle the welfare state, while the rapid rise of the German Communist Party threatened the bourgeoisie with something worse still. The petty bourgeoisie was radicalized yet further and flocked to support the Nazi Party. In a situation of full parliamentary democracy, the different fractions of capital were less able than ever to reconcile their interests at the political level, though in economic terms they were all agreed on the policy of smashing welfarism and the need to destroy the Communist Party and curb the unions. In this situation, they found a solution in the destruction of the Weimar state and the creation of a dictatorship, eventually accomplished, with their tolerance or support, by Hitler.

These arguments have much in common with the thesis advanced by the American historian David Abraham in his book, The Collapse of the Weimar Republic, which appeared shortly after the German edition of Eley and Blackbourn's work. It is probably no coincidence that the two books were published at the same time. In their different ways, both represent a fresh attempt to look at the origins of the Third Reich using the conceptual tools of contemporary Western Marxism. Such an attempt is long overdue. Marxist explanations of the rise of German fascism have tended to remain at a relatively high level of theoretical abstraction; if they have ventured into the terrain of the professional historians by attempting to provide their theses with some kind of empirical underpinning, they have run into serious problems. For a long time the debate has been bogged down in furious, seemingly never-ending and often minutely detailed empirical controversies about who belonged to the Nazi Party (was it classless, or petty-bourgeois, did it contain a substantial proletarian element?) or whether German capitalists financed Hitler. The theoretical assumptions on which much of this work rests seem remarkably simple: it is as if a satisfactory Marxist account had only to prove that Hitler was a tool of the industrialists and relied for his mass support on the petty bourgeoisie; or as if a demonstration of the inadequacy of the Marxist approach had only to disprove the same points.51

Abraham offers a way out of this quagmire through a combination of a new theoretical approach with substantial archival and primary research, in the context of an intensive reading of the most recent scholarship in the field. This unusual combination of abilities makes Abraham's work the most important Marxist contribution to the subject to appear for many years. Abraham's account of the drama is placed within very

²⁸ David Abraham, The Collapse of the Wosmer Republic Political Ecosomy and Crisis, Princeton 1981. A brief guide to controversies in this area is Pierre Ayçoberry, The Navi Question (London 1982). For a consideration of recent research on the social pattern of Nazi support see David Blackbourn, 'Nazi Votes', London Ramon of Books, Vol. 6 No. 20, 1–14 November 1984, pp. 11–12. For a useful anthology of Marxist writing on fuscism in the twenties and thirties see David Beetham, ed., Marxist in Face of Fairnin Writings by Marxists on Fairnin from the Interior Parad, Manchester 1984.

much the same theoretical setting as that of Blackbourn and Elev. He takes his cue from Gramsci and Poulantzas and is concerned to get away from the 'overworked area of financial support provided the Nazis by industrialists, bankers and barons' and to focus instead on 'the structural question of what types of solutions were acceptable to different fractions of industry' and agriculture (pp. 172, 168). Like Eley in his study of the rise of radical nationalism before 1914. Abraham approaches the parallel question of the triumph of Nazism in 1929-33 through a detailed examination of the shifting composition and strategies of the 'hegemonic bloc'. 52 He concludes that the bourgeoisie. weakened and divided by the Weimar Republic and confronted by a strongly organized working class, was plunged into a deep crisis by the Depression. Fascism, as a result, came to power not just because of the struggle between labour and capital, nor because of any kind of equilibrium between the two, but also because of 'the inability of fragmented dominant groups to organize and unify their interests' (p.326). The only way for industrialists and landed estate owners to protect their social dominance in these circumstances was to join forces to bring an end to the Weimar Republic. In this way, the political system could be reshaped to remove the political impediments to class unity and destroy the obstacle that organized labour posed to the accumulation of capital.

This approach has many merits. Its emphasis on material interests rather than irrational ideologies (such as antisemitism), or personal idiosyncracies (Hitler, Hindenburg, Papen), is important. Much of Abraham's book is devoted to a detailed substantiation of his claim in a way that moves economic problems back to the centre of the scene, where they should be. This shift in attention, away from concentration on the formal weaknesses of the Weimar constitution or the long-term weaknesses of German political culture, is in fact taking place more generally in historical studies of the triumph of Nazism, but Abraham's book is perhaps the most powerful demonstration of its value so far. In the detailed elaboration of his thesis Abraham generates innumerable insights into many specific aspects of late-Weimar politics. Finally, the concept of class fractions, of a divided, fragmented 'hegemonic bloc', is a very suggestive one that marks a considerable advance on the traditional 'Stamokap' model.

Yet there are real weaknesses in the model. In the first place it does not really manage to accommodate two of the institutions that played a central role in the crisis of the Weimar Republic, the army and the civil service. For this, the state needs to be conceptualized rather more explicitly than it is in Abraham's book, or perhaps in a different way. Nor does Abraham really make out a very persuasive case for the reconciliation of the agrarian and industrial fractions of capital in 1932. More fundamentally still, the book in a curious way reproduces, within a different conceptual framework, many of the standard arguments of liberal-Social Democratic West German historiography which Blackbourn and Eley have been so vigorously attacking. Abraham adopts a rigorous political reductionism in his concept of class: a class only exists

²² Eley, Reshaping the Garman Right (op cit)

by virtue of its organized participation in politics (pp. 19–20). This allows him to concentrate on political parties qua class organizations—the Catholic Centre Party, which cannot be seen in this way though it played a crucial role in the crisis, is given rather short shift—and above all on industrial and agrarian pressure-groups. These pressure-groups are equated with class fractions, and the history of the Republic's collapse is written in terms of the shifting alliances and alignments of these fractions.

Now, this procedure results in an excessively formalist, mechanical interpretation that often comes close to personifying class fractions as actors in the drama and so gives an insufficiently nuanced account of the complex nature even of the politics of the pressure-groups. Indeed, the primacy of theory in Abraham's approach has occasioned a notably careless handling of the detailed historical evidence which has provoked a savage over-reaction from some anti-Marxist American specialists in the field.53 Furthermore, Abraham's method involves examining the whole process from the top down. It pays little attention to the dynamics of the rise of Nazism and to the social history of the Depression in general. There is even a hint of the manipulative model of politics, in which the 'hegemonic bloc' of agrarians and industrialists manipulates a difficult and unruly Mittelstand into acquiescence in its rule in order to keep the workers down. As Abraham says (p.4): In examining the structures and trajectories of these various conflicts, and in analysing how they contributed to the demise of the republic, one is struck by how much they had in common with the developments of the Empire's last decade. Pressure groups, political parties, and areas of concentration all bore a remarkable similarity to their pre-war predecessors. The republican political and legal system, the defeat in World War I, the Versailles treaty, and numerous economic changes both domestic and international certainly altered the nature of conflict and its rules, but below the surface much remained the same or was restored.' Ironically, therefore, Abraham's work not only represents a return to high politics and organizational history (what the Germans call Verbandsgeschichte), but in doing so it also restates the theory of continuity in modern German history in a peculiarly rigid form.

Nevertheless David Abraham's study of the collapse of the Weimar Republic, and David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley's critique of the myth of the missing bourgeois revolution, taken together with their empirical work, come together to offer the beginnings of a new Marxist approach to the central problems of modern German history. This new approach, drawing heavily on Gramsci and other neo-Marxist writers in theory and method, does much to get away from the old Comintern dogmas which have informed so much Marxist work in this field—dogmas whose empirical foundation historians of Germany have increasingly revealed to be extremely shaky. The virtues of this work are obvious It shifts the ground of Marxist historiography from simple questions of agency to more complex questions of structure and interest. It offers a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of the German state

³³ See American Historical Review, 88 (1983), 4, pp. 1143-49 and the forthcoming exchange of views in Control European History (1983).

than that provided either by the old Stamokap theory or by the newer social-liberal structuralist approach. In historiographical terms it is contributing to a refocusing of attention away from vague and arbitrarily defined values and beliefs to questions of material interest which by their nature can be delineated more precisely in empirical terms. It mounts a new and explicitly Marxist challenge to recently developed liberal interpretations. It opens up many questions which previously seemed to be more or less settled. All this makes the appearance of this work an exciting moment in the historiography of modern Germany.

The political relevance of these arguments is also clear. If fascism was the product of pre-industrial or feudal influence, then it cannot happen again. If, however, we concede that a bourgeoisie or fractions of it. even when completely purged of feudal remnants, is not indissolubly wedded to parliamentary democracy, but may in times of severe crisis abandon this system for the harsh authoritarian and brutal dictatorship of a relatively independent force such as an army or a fascist regime, or an irresponsible, technologically advanced bureaucracy, so long as this does not seriously threaten its own interests, then clearly it can happen again. The latter view—which must appear convincing not only to Marxists but to all those who are concerned about civil liberties in our own society, or who have, for instance, taken the lesson of the destruction of parliamentary democracy in Chile in 1973—is in no way incompatible with the view that parliamentary democracy is the normal political system for a reasonably secure capitalist bourgeoisie. Germany's social formation in the 19th and early 20th centuries was as complex as that of any other capitalist system: an amalgam of many different elements, feudal and capitalist, aristocratic and bourgeois, proletarian and peasant. Just as the capitalist mode of production slowly reduced the area of operation of economic feudalism to marginality over the century, so the balance of forces in the social formation gradually shifted in favour of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, reducing the social and political power of the feudal aristocracy bit by bit. This process was uneven, but it was the major transformation that took place in 19th and 20th-century Germany, and Blackbourn and Eley are surely right to draw our attention to this fact.

Despite the reservations we have expressed in the course of this article, the work of Blackbourn and Eley has raised crucial questions about our understanding of the German past, and in a wider sense, about the relationship between economic structure and politics. Moreover, they have contributed signally to focusing the debate on the reality of change: on economic and social change, on political change, on new historical developments in the late 19th and early 20th century, and on how and why these took place and what effects they had. For these and many other aspects of their work, we all owe them a considerable debt of gratitude.

Surrealism and Patriotism: the Education of an American Novelist

Would you tell us something about the influences which have formed you as a writer?

I come from a family of conventional conservatives. But one grandfather was a sort of socialist. He brought Oklahoma into the Union—Oklahoma has the only 'socialist' constitution of any state. They don't draw attention to that and nobody has ever bothered to read it, but 'Alfalfa Bill' Murray, as my grandfather was called, cooked it up with a couple of other Populists. They were all William Jennings Bryan men, previously of the People's Party. There was a great Populist movement around 1894. It was anti-banks, anti-railroad, anti-black and anti-semitic. When Oklahoma joined the Union my grandfather became its first senator at the age of 36 or 37, and over the years moved more and more to the right. I was brought up in his house. He was benignly anti-black, not so benignly anti-semitic; he came to favour the rich, particularly oil companies. He was not corrupt. He died poor.

My father was the equivalent of Minister of Aviation under Franklin Roosevelt. He came from the Mid-West and was very, very conservative. He was a West Pointer. My stepfather was a Mr Auchincloss who was called by the egregious Steven Birmingham the 'first gentleman of the United States'. From the age of 10 to 17 I lived with Mr Auchincloss. That was the great world, equally conservative. So here you have three different strands: aviation, Mid-western conservatism; a Southern grandfather, ex-socialist, gone to the far right; and a stepfather who was called the first gentleman of the United States and led a life of great grandeur. I quite liked my grandfather and father, but I didn't like the last life, and so at the age of 17 I enlisted in the infantry for the Second World War just to get away from it all and I've never had a better time. The old joke is as true about the Americans as it is about the Brits with the public schools: the army was the first time I had been well fed and it was an eye-opener. This is a picture of somebody brought up in circumstances quite remote form the real world. Throughout the Depression we had seven servants in the house—all of them white, although in Washington servants were usually black. It was like a royal family: there was a Swedish maid, a Russian chef, etc. In the army I became the first mate of a boat up in the Aleutian Islands, mostly on watch in port, sitting there with nothing to do but stare at the wheelhouse. There wasn't anything to read. I wrote Williwaw at that time. Then I came to New York where I met Kiman Friar, an American Greek, a busy man who was teaching at Ambrose.

Is it true that you appear in Maya Deren's Ritual in Transfigured Time? How did that happen?

I was keeping company with a lady called Anais Nin, who was a friend of Maya Deren-later an enemy since Anaïs quarrelled with everybody eventually. And one day Maya says, 'We are making a film, come over. I want the two of you on the scene.' I have never seen the film, but we are all making ritual gestures at a cocktail party. I do have a piece of the film that Maya gave to me, but I have never actually watched it. It was another world. I was introduced to these people by Kiman Friar, who was giving a lecture to the YMHA. He asked me to come, and I came, still in uniform, and I sat down next to this extraordinary-looking woman, Anals Nin, whom I had never heard of before. My book was just about to come out, and she had just been written about by Edmund Wilson. We said, 'Hallo', and I said that she looked like Mary Stuart. She replied, 'Does that mean you will cut my head off?' I saw a great deal of her in the next couple of years. She was a friend of all the surrealists like André Breton. Jim Agee was hanging out with that set too. I was in the realist tradition, influenced by Steven Crane—not by Hemingway as people thought. Crane's Red Badge of Courage had shaped my early work. Then suddenly I was in this world—leftist or anarchist to the extent that surrealists were ever political. It was startling. I was so ashamed of my family I wouldn't tell anybody. When The City and the Pillar came out later everybody thought I had been a tennis-playing hustler, who was anyone's for fifty dollars.

Did you feel alienated from American society in the forties and the fifties?

No, I was bemused by it all. If you read things I wrote like *Messiah*, you will find them very right-wing. Very anti-communist, very anti-Russian—everything I had been taught. I wasn't alienated. I was quite successful with good reviews, a lot of press. I was one of the young novelists that *Life* magazine photographed, I was in orbit. We didn't question society.

But the reception of The City and the Pillar was very different.

That was several years later. I knew what to expect. I have a rather mean disposition. The only contemporary figure I identify with at all is John McEnroe. I was to the young novelists what he is to the tennis court. I didn't like this taboo about homosexuality, and I thought: if you people go on like this I am going to lob one right at you. So I did. The blackout began. My next five books were not reviewed by the Now York Times, by Time magazine or by Newweek. With that kind of blackout you no longer exist. In England all my books were still

reviewed, for which I am grateful, and this kept my reputation alive. I went broke about the age of 25, and I couldn't survive, so I wrote three mystery stories under another name, which had wonderful reviews in the New York Times. Then I turned to television.

Where is the radicalization, if it can be so called? I think it started with seeing the way in which the country tried to exclude anybody who was critical of its precepts: in this case, of its sexual politics. I don't think I had formulated very much at that time, but I thought that this was really a rather ugly society, that I had become a non-writer on such sectarian grounds; it was just what would happen in the Soviet Union. We are speaking now of '48 to '52, by which time McCarthyism had just begun. The most talented of us war writers was a guy called John Home Burns, who had an enormous success with his novel The Gallery. He then wrote Lucifer with a Book, a novel rather like The City and the Pillar, and they drove him out of the United States—you've never seen such a virulent press. He ended up in Italy where he drank himself to death aged 37. I watched this happen to a lot of people. My John McEnroe side was strong at this time, but I had to admit defeat. I couldn't survive as a novelist. I had no money of my own, contrary to legend, so I went into television drama. In about a year I was the highest-paid television writer. I did it well, but very easily. After ten years I had made enough money not to have to worry about anything. During that time the blacklisting began and all my friends were victims of it. I was too young to have been a Communist. That was thirties stuff and I had been a schoolboy then. The generation ten or more years older than me had all become Communists. They were then being black-balled right and left. Here I was with considerable power in television; the writers are more powerful than the directors, and equal to the producers. I would say: 'Look, I want Gale Sondergaard for this', and they would say: 'We've got to clear it with the 14th floor.' I didn't pay much attention. Then there was McCarthyism. They would ask: 'What are his politics?' Then they would check with Red Channels, an anti-Communist index. There used to be someone called the Butcher of Schenectady, a real patriot who would make stars come up there and say that they really loved America. He would threaten to withdraw all his advertising from television if what he called 'known Commies' were on. You had the Butcher on the one hand, Red Channels on the other, and it was terrible.

But I had an immaculate right-wing background, never having joined anything or paid any attention to practical politics—or impractical politics. I was perfectly clean. However, I got more and more irritated and wrote a play called A Sense of Justice, which was also done over here. It was on about '53 and '54, and the theme was a guy who decides to kill the boss of a state—somebody like McCarthy—out of a sense of justice. He has no other reason for doing it. It had a bit of a trick ending, with a final Sartrean exchange on the nature of power. When this went out over the air, it suddenly sank in that, though they didn't have anything on me, I had done something pretty damn subversive, instructing people to kill Joe McCarthy out of a sense of justice.

But television did help me to develop as a writer, as well as giving me

a lesson in how the country works. And, of course, I always meant to write more novels.

There seems to be a tension in your work. Your historical books are written in a rather realist vein. I am afraid that one of the weeklies even compared you to Trollope when Lincoln was published. But at the same time you write books like Myra Breckinridge or Duluth, which would have given Trollope a heart attack. How do you manage to combine these two modes?

One I call 'reflections'. I reflect on religion in Julian, on philosophic systems in Creation, and on the American Republic in the other historical novels. Reflections are just that. You study, you look for a pattern and you dramatize it. With Myra it was different. I heard this voice: I am Myra Breckinridge', she began to thunder in my ear. I don't know where she came from, perhaps my surrealist past. I sat there as an amanuensis to this extraordinary creature. These are 'the inventions'—invention for the sheer pleasure of it. I was walking down a street in Rome when I suddenly heard: 'Duluth, love it or loathe it, you can never leave it or lose it.' So I said: what the hell does that mean? I often talk to myself when I walk along and it's really making phrases out of words.

You know my American historical books are a big hit in the Soviet Union. Burr sold 900,000 copies in a very expensive illustrated edition. My publisher told me it had sold out in hours. I asked whether they would be interested in the other books but the editor there told me: 'Whatever government we may have one hundred years from now, I promise you that Myra Breckinridge will still not be published in Russian.' Well, as you know, all revolutionary governments are extremely conservative; whether it be Mexico City or Moscow, conservatism reigns.

In the 'inventions' your technique seems to parallel recent critical concern with the deconstruction of narrative and character.

This comes from what I read and watched as a kid, especially the Krazy Kat cartoon and Officer Pup. This was a very surrealist comic, in which you wouldn't be surprised to see the moon out in the middle of the day. In the last frame Officer Pup always ended up with a brick whizzing towards his head. Anything could happen in that comic: I expect Derrida read it too.

Creation challenges the West's view of history. You point out that the three big civilizations are India, China and Iran, and even the Greeks are rather peripheral. How did you write it? Did you travel through India?

Yes. About ten years ago I drove rather slowly from Delhi to Madras right through the centre, going through all of the Buddha's territory. I was overwhelmed by it. It is a great experience to do something like that and I regretted I had waited so long. I knew the terrain in Persia and Greece. The only place I hadn't been to was China and I learnt about that through reading archaeology and poems from the period, which had marvellous descriptions of rooms and everyday life. The

tactic was to reverse Herodotus and to see the world from the eyes of a Persian and of other cultures, and to examine our own culture in that way. What it required—and this is why you won't read many books like it—was to learn four different systems of thought and religion. It took a long time. I am lucky in having a lateral mind. I can cover a very wide range, but I am not much of a synthesizer. I can relate a number of things and I like doing it. Such as knowing that interest rates on loans in China were absolutely the same as those in Persia, although there was absolutely no connection between the two they were all running at 18 per cent. The debate was going on in all four civilizations on whether it was wise to write things down, just as we argue about computers and television. What was going to be the effect of the written text? This was the argument in the 1th century BC. If you no longer memorize, is knowledge any longer yours? If you have to open up a book, it doesn't belong to you. Knowledge should be in your head. We live in a literate world, but we live at another great hinge in history, when we are going beyond writing.

The mental world which Duluth inhabits seems to owe quite a lot to television. For some reason this image of American civilization has conquered the globe.

I never watch television, but I know all about it. One theme which runs through Duluth is total anarchy. I'm having a lot of fun with a lot of things. I have an old Stalinist friend who is a black woman who lives in Chicago. I tease her; I say: 'Hey, when is there going to be a revolution?' She says, "There ain't gonna be no revolution'; then I say: 'Why isn't there going to be a revolution?' and she says: 'How is there going to be a revolution when they watch eight hours of television every day? How can you get them out to have a revolution when they're watching that goddamned screen all day long?' Our masters have invented this toy which is the greatest pacifier short of putting everybody on valium. What is contemporary life? It's looking at television. Things have now reached the point when you can see the president of your country as a young man on the late-night movie, you can see him as a middle-aged man acting in a TV drama in the midevening, and then there is this old man, President of the United States, at a news conference in the early evening. What is real and what isn't real? Once you start into that you go right out of your skull. You have a whole nation of irrealists. This was my commanding image all the way through Dulath.

Did you know Reagan in his acting days?

I have known Reagan slightly for a hundred years. If he came into a room, people would gallop like gazelles to avoid him. He is the most boring man that ever drew breath, but a superb actor. All this stuff about him being a B movie actor is bullshit. I was a kid when he was a movie star. When he went into the army—or rather went over to Culver City to do documentaries for the war—he was one of the top ten movie stars in the United States. He was, and still is, a very good actor. He was not very interested in politics. His conversation was entirely: 'Well, you know, I went in to see Jack Warner—Mr Warner, I never actually called him Jack—I think I admire him more than

anyone I've ever known.' There might a a major political crisis, and he's talking about the Ida Lupino contract. He's back in 1937 and he's giving you the Ida Lupino 1937 movie star contract as the western world falls apart. But everybody would run at his approach. If I had known he was going to be President, I would have stayed still and listened to him, ingratiated myself in order later to destroy him.

I could have had him cast in one of my plays, The Best Man. He was offered to me in '59 by his agent for the lead as a Presidential candidate, and I said I didn't think he would be believable. Had he been in it, he would have run for two years, won the Tony award, had a whole new career and we would never have had him as President. So I consider myself Warwick the Kingmaker. In which case we would have had Melvyn Douglas, whom I did cast, as President. He would have been superb. A brilliant man politically.

What is terrifying is that television has the power of making tiny little situations seem like what is happening in the whole world. I'm thinking of the US Embassy in Iran or the Falkland Islands or the Korean air disaster. Suddenly world politics is reduced to something which appears very simple, and intelligible, but could blow us all up.

The media determine what news is news by rigorous selection. They have decided that Reagan is to win and Mondale is to lose. Not that there is really any difference between the two. Mondale is a loyal Pentagon man. He would increase the defence budget by 5 per cent, Reagan by 10 per cent. The rich would profit just as much under Mondale. But there are marginal differences. Mondale has said that corporations ought to pay tax. In fact he picked up something from my '82 Senate campaign; corporations no longer pay any tax, and I was going round giving this speech saying they should pay a flat 15 per cent on profits, and no fiddling. Mondale made the mistake of saying that, and now there is not a chance in the world that he will be accepted as President.

This is how it is done The media decided that he was 'boring'. Mondale is boring, but then Reagan is boring, Dan Rather is boring, most Americans are boring. What is all this boring shit about? But they then began to prove it. With alligator tears they would say, 'Mondale just lacks charisma; he's boring.' They have several miles of TV tape during any given day of the campaign. They'll take sixty seconds of Mondale being boring. And then Dan Rather will shake his head, because we know deep down that he is really a liberal, so it's a pity that Mondale is boring. But it's all media-created. You could show footage of Mondale and it could be a Nuremberg rally. This way we Americans become a people almost evenly divided between conservatives and reactionaries.

They have destroyed Geraldine Ferraro in very much the same way.

That is even more fascinating. It is really because she is a woman. They are having enough trouble getting erections without having this uppity woman in power over them.

She has come out better than Mondale on Central America.

But it doesn't matter what anybody says. It's how things are presented, and who pays them; they are all paid for by the same people. Those with large amounts of property control the parties, which control the state, which takes through taxes the people's money and gives a certain amount of it back to keep the populace happy while reserving a prime share of tax revenue for the oligarchy's own use in the form of purchases from the defence budget. There's a certain neatness to all this, as you can see, and the two party system fits into it. The Republicans and the Democrats have it all sewn up and make sure nobody else gets a chance. I was co-chairman of the People's Party with Dr Spock in the seventies and we had great difficulty even getting on the ballot. Our people were literally shot at in Texas and in many states they have a battery of technicalities for keeping you off the ballot.

Yet when you ran in the Democratic Primary in California in 1982 you won half a million potes.

I had to work hard for two years travelling all over the state making speeches and meeting people. If you attack the defence budget and the corporations you can get support. Of course the wine-and-cheese liberals did not support me. In fact they hated me with a passion because I meant business and they don't like anybody who really means to tax the corporations or make life difficult for them. But we had support from blacks, from Jewish women, from some Hispanics. It wasn't easy since you confront very powerful interests. Consider the religions. A major reform would be to tax the holdings of the religions. They're sitting there with billions and billions of dollar portfolios, paying no tax and interfering in the political process which they're not supposed to do. One of the reasons the cities are decaying is that most down-town areas belong to Churches. You cannot raise money in the centre of any city because every other house or garage belongs to a Church of some kind.

Do you think there is a future for the Democratic Party or any wing of it?

I like Jesse Jackson. Certainly on the subject of the defence budget and the Third World he makes a lot of sense. But our problem is that we don't have political parties. We haven't been allowed to have them. We have these curious little coalitions. The question is: how do you get the blacks, the gays, the ERA women into a single party? There are so many emotional hot buttons you press. Will any white take the blacks seriously, will any black take a gay or a woman seriously? The Hispanics mistrust them all and are more conservative than anybody. You know the Labour movement. Is anybody more conservative than a trade unionist on everything except trade unionism?

But this can change. During our miners' strike you have had black communities giving lots of support, and the NUM voted for the demands of blacks and women at the Labour Conference.

Well, it's true that I got support from blue-collar clubs in my Senate

campaign in California. But I wouldn't compare it with Britain. It's a different case here. You have had a long-postponed class war which could erupt at any moment. Practically everybody in England, from the Queen on down, is walking wounded from the class war. Everybody's psyche has been scarred by it. Mrs Thatcher seems to be the instrument of history, making the whole thing blow up with her instransigence.

We bear you gave f.1,000 to the striking miners.

That's true. I suppose they must have told a reporter.

How do you see the contrast between the British and American ruling classes in the era of Thatcher and Reagan?

The ruling class in Britain is changing. There is a move towards the grocer's daughter away from the Cecil families. Our rulers are more managerial, more Harvard Business School. If you want to remove these two ruling classes, as I do, get rid of the schools to which I went. Open up the schools and introduce a different ethos, then you might undermine the oligarchy, though mentocracy would be equally to be avoided. I used to know Lady Astor. She was a woman who could be funny about herself. She would describe going to see Stalin along with Bernard Shaw. She and Shaw talked all the time and Stalin only got in two words and finally she said, 'Marshal Stalin, when are you going to stop killing people?' and he said: 'The undesirable classes do not liquidate themselves.' She didn't say another word after that. Of course Stalin was a monster, but it's true that the privileged don't liquidate themselves, and if you tried to challenge their schools you would have a fight on your hands.

Death duties is another method to look at. When George McGovern said that no one could inherit more than 500,000 dollars I almost went out and voted for the first time in a Presidential election. He said that in a primary, and by the time he was nominated he had forgotten he had ever said it. That was the most revolutionary thing which was ever said in any political campaign in my lifetime. It really indicated great change.

Don't you think that the fact that there are no political parties is one of the reasons why the American state gets out of control? Surely the Presidential system will have to be changed?

That's what I advocate in my 'Second American Revolution'. I want a parliamentary system in which the chief of state is separate from the chief of government. When they are the same the head of the government can wrap himself in the flag and say: you can't attack me, I'm the nation incarnate.

This is a residue of monarchism in the US Constitution.

¹ Gore Vidal, "The Second American Revolution", Prob Triongle and Yellow Stor, Hememann, London 1982, pp. 247–75.

It's more than that. It's a Roman Emperor in the Tacitus style. Our President is an Unholy Roman Emperor, on the Teutonic model. It's that kind of monarchy and it's dangerous. It means rule by decree and executive order. It's bolstered by a ten million executive establishment and by generally sycophantic media.

You have called for a Constitutional Convention, baven't you?

This may even happen. Thirty states have asked for it. Two more and we get it. It was the crazies who did it; the people who want a balanced budget and want to put a ban on abortion into the Constitution, but I think we can co-opt it, because there are more of us than there are of these nuts. The liberals hate this idea. Liberals are always very happy with the way things are. In their view, you should just get nicer people in and they get jobs; by and large the liberals don't want change.

Your new novel Lincoln² is a magnificent account of cabinet intrigme and of the grandeur of Lincoln himself. But I would like to question its conservatism and patriotism. It seems to me that the early part of the novel underplays the abolitionist movement and the anti-slavery element in Northern Republican politics. I don't think you really like the abolitionists at all. Do you see them as ancestors of the Moral Majority?

There were elements of that. It was certainly the New England tradition which produced these divines, who in turn produced the abolitionist movement. Of course they were right on slavery but I don't think they were congenial to anybody.

Which makes them interesting figures. You don't mention Garrison, Wendell Philips, Anna Dickinson and yet they did meet Lincoln, and in the end impinged on the whole country.

They set up the climate. I have two of them in the characters of Chase and Sumner to give us the abolitionist view of things. Chase never lets up on that issue and always finds Lincoln weak on it. Sumner is the same. That is quite enough abolitionists to have in the centre of a drama. Lincoln himself was anti the militants. He was a moderate; he was against the extension of slavery in the Western Territories, but he didn't think he or anybody had the right to eliminate slavery in the South.

You are right to portray Lincoln's decisions on slavery as motivated by military necessity. But emancipation was a massive act of expropriation. In contrast to the British emancipation Lincoln did not compensate the slaveowners. It would be like somebody in the United States today advocating the expropriation of all overseas holdings of American corporations.

Yes, it was taking property away, but Lincoln always wanted to compensate the slaveowners, and he had a good deal of support for that.

² Gore Vidal, Laurely, a seed, Heinemann, London 1984, 619pp, £9 95

Not from the abolitionists, though some, like Chase, were weak. You don't like him, do you?

He's a great comic figure; to me he is a Pecksniffian type. He's quite admirable; a rather brilliant and very honest man as it turns out. Chase is responsible for the greenbacks and our whole economic system, but after he became Chief Justice he struck down practically every single one of his own measures as Secretary of the Treasury.

You give a very good account of bow Lincoln made it appear that it was the Confederacy which provoked the war. Couldn't it have been the same with slavery? Couldn't be have made it appear that he was being dragged reluctantly into doing the thing that he really wanted to do?

The first law of being a politican is to get the people into such a mood that when you act you seem to be expressing their will. Look at Franklin Roosevelt in the Second World War. Here's an isolationist country that he has got to bring into the war, but he can't just say: now we have got to go in and defend England. He has got to keep manoeuvring and waiting. The reason why Lincoln freed the slaves was that England and France were about to recognize the Confederacy. They were desperate to break up the United States. If they had started helping out down there it would have been very difficult for us. Lincoln was supported by the liberals and they were getting more and more angry at the way Lincoln was dragging his feet on the slavery issue. What support we had was being eroded. Meanwhile the Lord John Russells and the Palmerstons were just aching for an opportunity to help the South.

Seward and Chase argued against emancipation and Lincoln sprung it on his own cabinet. He more or less told them he was going to do it.

Lincoln had a difficulty with that cabinet—which was why he sprung it the way he did. They said: why don't you free the slaves in the Union, which you can do? Chase and Seward would have wanted that, but the Blairs wouldn't. If Lincoln had freed slaves in the loyal states it would have been fatal: there goes Kentucky, there goes Tennessee, there goes Maryland, there goes Delaware, there go the Border states, and there goes the Union.

The real abolitionist leaders such as Garrison and Frederick Douglas were very much in favour of Lincoln, and they understood this tactic of freeing the slaves by stages. They understood that if slavery was wiped out in the Confederacy it wouldn't last long anywhere else.

The Confederacy would have died out soon anyway. That was the view which Seward came round to. Seward was an abolitionist and did not want slavery extended. Everybody knew that the future of the United States was in the West and the extension of slavery had to be nipped in the bud, which is what brought on the Civil War. Seward wanted to ignore the South, since it would fall apart anyway—it would have been a two-crop country with a lot of mosquitoes, and not very well organized.

But the per capita income was higher among the white population in the South than in the North. It was economically booming.

But it was the one crop, cotton, and secondarily tobacco. They had nothing to compare with the manufactories in the North, not to mention the huge reservoirs of manpower.

People think of Lincoln as a great man, father of his country (in your view, perhaps a syphilitic father). His reputation rests on the fact that he saved the Union. But what about the abolition of slavery? Is this not the redeeming act of a callous nation-builder?

Which, you are saying, is a higher moral issue than the preservation of the Union. That isn't what Lincoln thought.

That could be the irony, that the best thing he did he didn't wish to do. It was what made saving the Union worthwhile. If the Union had been saved without slavery being abolished it would have been even more of a monstrosity.

But that is extrapolating; it's hindsight. You have to deal with what he had to deal with. So perhaps this is a new view of Lincoln.

Whatever one thinks about what became of the Republican Party in Redemption and in the 1870s, not to speak of later decades, there was something rather fine about ante-hellum Republicanism. It had a popular element summed up in the song 'John Brown's Body'. John Brown was a disordered man but also a primitive revolutionary. This song has endured: it is known to every English person. In your book it is only referred to glancingly. The song you feature in the book is 'Hail to the Chief'. You do refer to the Battle Hymn of the Republic, but without the 'John Brown' element the Union troops wouldn't have stormed the ridge outside Atlanta.

I think you are all wrong. I think you are taking as the national will the expression of a few high-minded divines of great eloquence, in particular Wendell Philips, and you think that that was what motivated the people. The people rallied to the colours to preserve the Union. You couldn't even mention the black man in many parts of the Union. Hatred of the blacks was even greater in the North than in the South. In the South they grew up with them; there was no personal feeling. There were immigrants, in particular the Irish, who were violently anti-black. They had the draft riots in New York and refused to fight in the war. The whole black issue was a very delicate one. There was never more than a small militant minority which was really gung ho on abolition. As for songs, the President hears 'Hail to the Chief' rather more often than 'John Brown's Body', and prefers the first to the second.

This whole anti-black feeling is a corruption of our culture, and was certainly present in virulent form in the North. Yet to win the war and crush the planters the Yankoes had to modify their prejudices and listen to the abolitionists. The Union might have been a society full of racists, but it gave black people the vote and armed them. They were allowed to elect their fellows as Senators. It wasn't love of black people; it was hatred of Southern planters.

You always vote against in these Republics, you never vote for anybody; there isn't anybody to vote for, but there is an awful lot you don't like that you can vote against. They hated the Southerners and wanted to punish them, and what better thing than to send down carpet-baggers, black or white, to lord it over them. That was a very ugly motivation and it corrupted Reconstruction.

Surely there were some very good aspects to Reconstruction? There was an element of corruption, but there has been that in every American government. They introduced public education.

Far more lasting was the impact on the generality of whites. Reconstruction led to the Ku Klux Klan and a rabid racism in the South which had not existed before. Before you had some tolerance, but then you had carpet-baggers forced on them, as an act of revenge and humiliation. I'm afraid that cancelled out the good intentions of the abolitionists and bequeathed us a poisonous legacy of racism, and arrogance.

But there were poor whites who supported these Reconstruction governments. The votes show it; black votes alone wouldn't have elected these governments.

The Union garrisons must have helped. But if you know of anything which bears out what you say about the Reconstruction governments send it to me. I'd be interested to see it. I believe the only left-wing party in the South which has ever been in power was the one my grandfather came out of, the Populist Party, and it was anti-black.

Are you going to go on after Lincoln to complete this cycle of novels on American history and bring it up to date?

I am working on a book which will come between 1876 and Washington DC. I think I will call it Manifest Destiny. It deals with 1898 through 1919: with the Spanish-American war which brings us the Pacific Empire, and then the First World War which makes us a world power. In 1914 we finally ceased to be a debtor nation, which was the first sign of being a world empire. This year, for the first time since 1914, we have again become a debtor nation. Now another shift is going on in the world. I'll do a final volume from the point of view of the present in which I will introduce myself and start bringing the strands together.

Around 1898 there's a difficulty disentangling the idealism from the imperialism. In acquiring the Empire they actually freed Cuba.

They behaved very well over that McKinley was quite a noble figure, if I can say this myself, since he was my great-great-uncle. Of course a very limited man—he could only talk about the tariff. That was his great subject.

The Cubans played their cards very well. They spent more money in Washington than the Democrats. They had money and they used it to get the amendment on Cuban independence.

One of their leading publicists was Henry Adams himself. He wrote

papers for Senator Cameron of Pennsylvania, who was one of the prime movers in this. All the first-rate intellectuals in the United States were in the Cuba Libre movement, all thanks to very good lobbying.

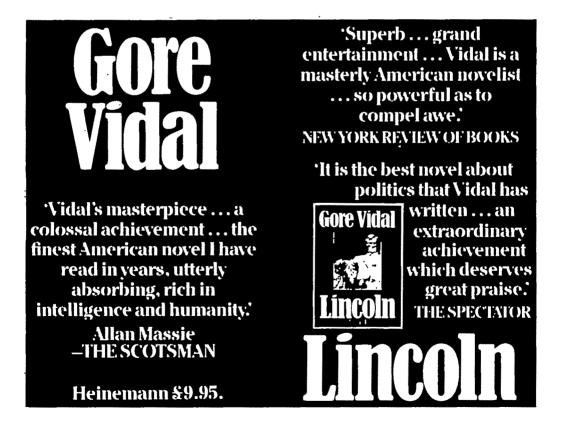
Which novelists do you enjoy reading yourself?

Not many. I always read Calvino. I am very pleased that he liked *Duluth*. He did a marvellous piece about it in *Repubblica*. I always read Burgess, sometimes good, sometimes not, but he's lively.

Marquez?

I can't stand Márquez. When people get into very long sentences with billowing metaphors I begin to get a little edgy, and Myra begins to thunder in my ear: 'Cut the crap', she shouts. I like Saul Bellow. He's an old right-wing conservative puritan while I'm a left-wing conservative puritan.

Interpurers: TA and RB



Comment Iane Lewis

The Debate on Sex and Class

The debate amongst marxist feminists and socialist feminists about sex and class—that is, about the relationship between gender ideology and the material basis of women's oppression and whether patriarchal structures exist independently from those of capitalism—is presently being pursued in two journals, New Left Review and Studies in Political Economy. All the participants agree that women's subordination preceded capitalism and none explicitly espouses a dual systems approach, although it is the contention of Brenner and Ramas in New Left Review and of Pat and Hugh Armstrong in Studies in Political Economy that Michèle Barrett has in fact fallen into this trap. The major departure in the work of Brenner and Ramas and the Armstrongs to identify the material basis of women's oppression lies in their attempts to theorize the biological component of sexual difference. Like Michèle Barrett (in her response to Brenner and Ramas) I am not wholly convinced by the attempt. If, as Barrett says, feminists have been 'squeamish' in the face of biology² it is largely because of the difficulty they experience in skirting the mine-field of biological determinism. The arguments of these authors do little to reassure. Both sets of authors use women's reproductive capacities to explain sexual divisions under capitalism. The Armstrongs argue that capitalism is 'premised on free wage labour and on the separation of most aspects of workers' reproduction from the productive process',3 and Brenner and Ramas that it was 'likely if not inevitable' (p. 48) that in the harsh circumstances of the nineteenth century women would take responsibility for children and domestic labour. Biology thus appears less and less the merely limiting factor the Armstrongs would have it be.

It appears to me that the approach of both Brenner and Ramas and the

¹ Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramaa, 'Rethinking Women's Oppression', New Left Ramar, No. 144 (March-April 1984), pp. 37-71 and Michèle Barrett, 'Rethinking Women's Oppression: A Reply to Brenner and Ramas', New Left Ramar, No. 146 (July-August 1984), pp. 123-8. Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, 'Beyond Sexless Class and Classics Sex. Towards Feminist Marxism', Studies in Publical Economy 10 (Winter 1983), pp. 7-41, Patrica Coonelly, 'On Marxism and Feminism', Studies in Publical Economy 12 (Fall 1983), pp. 153-161, and Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, 'More on Marxism and Feminism A Response to Patricia Coonelly', Studies in Publical Economy (forthcoming) ² Barrett, 'A Reply', p. 123.

³ Armstrong and Armstrong, Beyond Sexless Class', p. 39.

Armstrongs is not as productive as it might be. For as they all agree, irrespective of patriarchy's origins, it is now part of the same system as capitalism. The Armstrongs suggest: Women are simultaneously subject to capitalism, male dominance and their bodies. To pose the question in the form of alternatives is like asking whether ideas or material conditions structure women's subordination. They are inseparable. They act together. Patriarchy and capitalism are not autonomous, nor even interconnected systems, but the same system. As integrated forms they must be examined together.'4

And Barrett has written in her NLR response: 'So we cannot counterpose ideology on the one hand and women's economic situation on the other, because to do so is to ignore the degree to which the two are analytically related.'5 This suggests to me, and I think the historical evidence supports it, that the main project at this stage must be to explore further the complex dynamic of the relationship between gender ideology and class. However, Pat and Hugh Armstrong have signalled their impatience with this approach when in their latest contribution they express dissatisfaction with Barrett's idea of gender ideology as 'a pre-capitalist vestige taken over and shaped as capitalism developed historically in various social formations', and ask 'when if at all, a more general explanation will emerge. Will it only be when in positivistic fashion enough bits of historical evidence have been accumulated? 6 I accept that historical evidence is not necessarily binding because of its partial nature, but both Brenner and Ramas and the Armstrongs do take history seriously and in the case of the former have chosen to construct their argument firmly on the basis of empirical historical evidence.

I would maintain that it is difficult to see how much more progress can be made in building theory without a more rigorous attention to the historical evidence that is being used. In particular, enough work has been done, chiefly by socialist feminist historians, to indicate that the structure of Brenner and Ramas' argument cannot adequately be supported, and I hope to demonstrate that the development of a materialist theory of gender ideology can proceed only after some modifications to their interpretation. In what follows I shall take in their original order Brenner and Ramas' three areas of discussion: the role of trade unions and protective legislation in the formation of the family-household system; the importance of biological reproduction in explaining women's position in family and workplace; and women and the welfare state.

The Ideology of Separate Spheres

Brenner and Ramas start their argument by accepting the importance of the family-household system for our understanding of the sexual division of labour, but they reject the idea that its emergence can be explained in terms of the introduction of protective legislation and trade

⁴ Del, p 19.

⁵ Barrett, 'A Reply', p 127

⁴ Amstrong and Armstrong, 'More on Marxism and Feminism'

union exclusive practices which, in their reading of Barrett, account for women's precarious place in production and hence their dependence on men and their domestic role in the family. Almost certainly, protective legislation as an explanatory variable will not bear the weight of this argument, but it is difficult to see that Brenner and Ramas' reading of Barrett is correct. In Women's Oppression Today, protective legislation is treated as one of many strategies pursued by the labour movement in bargaining with capital. There is undoubtedly room for further research on its effects, particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The old account by Hutchins and Harrison, which Brenner and Ramas rely on, is undoubtedly the most exhaustive we have, but we need to be aware that its interpretation is Fabian and that in its day it was very much a part of the contemporary debate between liberal and socialist feminists over the issue. The role of male trade unionists, however, is more difficult to assess. Brenner and Ramas contend that, 'it is entirely unnecessary to resort to ideology to explain why trade unions were particularly adamant in their opposition to female entry into their trades' (p. 45). Of course, male unionists were right to fear that women would undercut their wages. The Women's Protective and Provident League, formed in 1874, was also aware of this problem, and thus when three women mule spinners were introduced at Lostock Mill on women's rates of pay, and the mule spinners stopped taking women piecers as a result, the League took no action.8 But unions were very slow to move away from a policy of exclusion towards one of organizing women workers. The statement of the traditional, liberal, craft trade unionist, Henry Broadhurst, to the Tuc in 1877 that male unionists should use their 'utmost efforts to bring about a conduct of things where their wives should be in their proper place at home's is well known. But there is also Tom Mann's statement, as an organizer of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, to the Royal Commission on Labour that he was 'very loth to see mothers of families working in factories at all', adding that he considered, 'their employment has nearly always a prejudicial effect on the wages of the male worker'10 Here a clear ideology of women's proper place and the fear of female competition are to be seen reinforcing one another, which suggests that an analysis of the production and dynamics of gender ideology (missing from Barrett's work, as Brenner and Ramas point out) is crucial.

Where women were accepted as union members, they tended to be confined to special sections paying lower contributions and getting lower benefits. In the Bolton Amalgamated Bleachers', Dyers' and Finishers' Association before World War I, men qualified as full members, boys as half members and women as one-third members. ¹¹ It was usually assumed that women would not play an active role in union affairs. The Blackburn Association of cotton weavers provided that no 'person' would be eligible for office in the Society if 'his wife and

⁷ B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison, A History of Factory Legislation, London 1903 and Josephine Butler, et al., Legislation Restrictions on the Industry of Women from the Women's Point of View, np. 1872.

^{*} Barbara Drake, Womes in Trade Usees, London 1920, p. 23

¹ Ibul , p 17

¹⁰ pp , Minutes of Evidence taken before the Royal Commussion on Labour, c 7065, 1893-1894, 39, O 4447

¹¹ Barbara Drake, Warren in Trade Ument, p. 137

children' were not trade union members. 12 Joanna Bornat has shown how women's relationship to trade unionism and the workplace more generally was mediated by the institution of the family;13 and it is clear that women's domestic role, whether actual, or in the case of young women, anticipated, did place real limitations on their capacity to organize and on their expectations: most women accepted that because of their extensive domestic burdens their wage-earning would be secondary and their status at the workplace, therefore, inferior to that of men. But it is also necessary to explain, as Brenner and Ramas do not, how it is that the assumption that women will occupy a secondary place in the labour force persists in the minds of large numbers of women and even larger numbers of men after World War II, when women's domestic burdens eased. The beliefs and behaviour of male unionists suggest first, that opposition was based on more than just fear of undercutting, and second, that their particular concern to prevent married women's work was grounded in the belief that it was improper and unnatural. Brenner and Ramas are quite correct to assert that gender ideology is rooted in women's and men's actual experience and not merely imposed and internalized, but that experience has different meanings for working-class men and women, and their expressed consciousness of gender has, therefore, been different. Sally Alexander makes a similar point in a recent issue of History Workshop Journal. She argues that the experience of class is not always a shared and even one, and believes it necessary to use psychoanalytical tools to probe the subjective meaning of class for men and women through language.14

Brenner and Ramas maintain that in the 19th century the harsh material realities of biological reproduction were such that sexual divisions were not negotiable and that there was little possibility of any outcome other than that women would bear primary responsibility for children and domestic labour. They also suggest that because of the extent of women's domestic burdens, this sexual division of labour secured the greatest possible welfare for members of the working-class family (p. 51). This analysis has the great merit of recognizing that 'the bourgeois family ideal' was indeed a shared ideal; it is important to determine what was shared as well as what was not. Women labour leaders were as keen as men to see married women withdraw from the workforce. and Elizabeth Robert's oral evidence from the North West has indicated that women who were forced through the sickness, unemployment or neglect of their husbands to do two full-time jobs, paid and unpaid, were pitted by thier neighbours. 15 As Ellen Ross has observed, the marriage contract between working-class men and women did not enjoin romantic love or verbal or sexual intimacy but rather required

^{12 [}bul, p. 118

D Joanna Bornat, 'Home and Work. A New Context for Trade Union History', Radical America 12 (September-October 1978)

¹⁴ Sally Alexander, "Women, Class and Sexual Differences in the 1830s and 1840s. Some Reflections on the Writing of a Feminist History', History Workship Journal, 17 (Spring 1984), pp. 123-149.

¹³ Gertrude Tockwell, The State and Its Children, London 1894; Mrs. J. R. Mar.Donald, et al., Wage Earning Methers, London ad, Elmabeth Roberts, 'The Working Cless Family in Barrow and Lancaster, 1890–1930', unpublished Ph.D. Diss., University of Lancaster, 1978.

financial obligations, services and activities that were gender-specific. ¹⁶ Married women expected to manage the household and keep it together, caring for children and husbands and taking paid work as, and when, the family economy required it.

Nevertheless, essential reinforcement for this pattern of sexual divisions was provided by gender ideology, and this goes unacknowledged by the authors. This is evident in their uncritical acceptance of middleclass testimony as to the harmful consequences of factory work for women and their children (p. 52). Social investigators, whether of the political Left or Right, and medical officers of health tended to attribute the high infant-mortality rate of the 19th century to working mothers. But as Carol Dyhouse has argued convincingly, women's work alone will not explain the infant mortality rates.¹⁷ Ada Nield Chew, an early 20th-century working-class mother, feminist and labour movement activist, pointed out that, 'while the infant mortality rate was high in Burnley, where a large proportion of women worked, housing conditions were also very poor. In Nelson, three miles away, an equal number of women went out to work, yet the infant mortality rate was much lower.'18 The majority of commentators making the link between infant mortality and women's work were firmly convinced that working women inevitably made 'bad' mothers. They argued that they were necessarily ignorant of proper methods of child care and household management, hence the emphasis placed by the early 20th-century infant welfare movement on 'educating' mothers rather than on improving sanitary conditions and the quality of the milk supply.¹⁹

Moreover, it is necessary to make the point that the effects of the general condemnation of women's work were harmful to women as workers. We can be sure that large numbers of wives and mothers were forced to engage in arduous paid work, often at home, washing or sewing (very little of which would have been recorded in government documents), because as Rowntree's evidence showed, the wages of a labourer in regular employment were insufficient to keep a family of two to four children from primary poverty. Thus when, for example, the Board of Education phased out provision for under three's by 1904 and reduced the number of places for three-to-five-year-olds by almost half between 1901 and 1911, In large part as a response to criticisms of those active in the infant welfare movement, the lot of women trying to contribute to the family economy significantly worsened.

Ellen Ross, "Fierce Questions and Taunts" Marined Life in Working Class London, 1870–1914', Formut Studies 2 (1982), and "Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London before World War II', History Workshop Journal No. 15 (Spring 1985)

T Carol Dyhouse, 'Working Class Mothers and Infant Mortality in England, 1895–1914', in Charles Webster, ed., Bushgr, Muham and Sacasty, 1849–1949, Cambridge 1981.

¹⁸ Dorts Nield Chew, Ade Nield Chew The Life and Writings of a Working Woman, London 1982, pp

¹⁹ Jane Lewis, The Politics of Matherhood, London 1980

²⁰ This point has also been one of the major crincisms of Jane Humphner' article, 'Class Struggle and the Resistance of the Working Class Family', Combining Journal of Economics 1 (September 1977).

²¹ B. Seebohm Rowntree, Powrty. A Study of Town Life, London 1913, pp 66-72.

²² N Whithread, The Evolution of the Nursery-Infant School, London 1972, pp 64 and 50

Occupational Segregation and Hiring Practices

To argue that women's domestic responsibilities also explain the origins and reproduction of sexual segregation in the labour market (p. 55) is additionally problematic. Even though Brenner and Ramas would never suggest that women 'choose' the kind of jobs they find themselves in, their argument nevertheless comes dangerously close to a reductionism which parallels that of the neoclassicists in many respects. Neoclassicists hold that women are disadvantaged in the labour market because of their family responsibilities. Women's skills are not less valued than those of men, but women are worth less to employers because of the constraints placed upon them by their domestic duties.²³

Of course, Brenner and Ramas recognize the vicious circle²⁴ that women as a group find themselves in: on the assumption of heterosexual coupling and no collective child-care provision, women are trapped within certain kinds of work in the labour market and in certain jobs at home, and they explain this historically in terms of the domestic burdens which it was well-nigh impossible for women to avoid. But this is too simple. Women's position in the workforce can only be explained by complex changes in the relationship between women and men workers, trade unions, employers and the state, and in relation to the changing nature and structure of jobs, which is, in turn, dependent on the scale and technique of production and methods of work organization.²⁵

It is true that 'the sex typing of jobs has been fairly flexible' (p. 57) historically, but the crucial point is that sexual segregation has been maintained. Historically, women have been able to move into an occupation as particular skills have been 'diluted' or processes subdivided (the engineering industry in World War I being the classic example), or as a result of technological innovation (e.g., the telephone and the typewriter), or with the introduction of a new service (e.g., state elementary school teaching). Some occupations have become feminized, as changes in the scale and techinque of production have rendered them 'blind alley jobs'; this happened in retailing and certain kinds of office work at the end of the 19th century. Alternatively, women have lost their place in other occupations, such as medicine where the knowledge base was redefined (by men) and the training formalized, with a concomitant rise in status and prestige.

The pattern of male dominance and control at the workplace must be related to power relationships within the family.²⁶ It has been suggested that male domination of the pre-industrial family work unit and the

²³ Leading exponents of the new family economics include: in the USA, Gary Becker, The Economics of Descriptionation, New York 1971, and in Britain, B. Chiplin and P. Sloune, Sex Distrimination and the Labour Market, London 1976.

²⁴ The best analysis of the various theoretical positions on women and the labour market is to be found in Irene Bruegel's, 'Women's Employment, Legislation and the Labour Market', in J. Lewis, ed., 'Frence's Welfert|Frence's Rights, London 1983.

²⁵ See Jill Ruberty, 'Structured Labour Markets, Worker Organization and Low Pay', Combining Journal of Economic 2 (1978)

Sally Alexander, Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-1850', in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, eds., The Rights and Wrongs of Women, Harmondsworth 1976.

practice of sexually segregating work processes was carried over into the factory when the workplace separated from the home. Men and , women did not always perform the same kind of tasks in the factory as in the home, but the boundary between men's and women's work was defended in the face of technological change which threatened to blur sexual boundaries. In the textile industry, for instance, skilled men (for example, mule spinners, overlookers, and strippers and grinders) managed to maintain their dominant position by means of union exclusiveness and the control they exerted over apprenticeship, and via their power to subcontract work.27 Despite Brenner and Ramas' doubts, it seems that skilled work has become, by definition, work that is not performed by women. For example, while oxyacetylene-welding was classed as skilled work prior to 1914, as soon as women entered the trade during World War I, employees reduced the pay by 50%. In this case, the women formed a union and won a partial victory. Women in the felt hat trade were not so fortunate. From 1920 onwards, the skilled work traditionally done by women in this trade was increasingly performed by semi- and unskilled male machine operators, so that by 1945 the only genuinely skilled workers left were women. But when it came to wages, the men were still classed as skilled and the women as semi-skilled. In both these examples, skill may be seen to have been socially constructed.²⁸ Women undoubtedly lacked the power to pursue successful wage bargaining negotiations, which may be attributed in large part to their domestic burdens, but this is not sufficient to account for the belief of male workers, employers and women workers themselves that there existed a woman's job and a woman's rate.

In the case of employers, their hiring practices would seem to have been irrational. For example, one large-scale employer told a social investigator during the early 1930s that his firm did not permit 'the indiscriminate working of men and women together'. (A similar moral sensibility inspired policymakers to pass protective legislation stopping women's work in the mines during the 19th century.) Thus even though women were cheaper and in all probability available to work in greater numbers (the 1930s being a decade of high male unemployment, falling working-class fertility, and rapidly increasing production of domestic

²⁷ Recent analyses of the labour process in teatiles unfortunately do not address gender explicitly. William Laxonick, Industrial Relations and Technological Change. The Case of the Self-acting Mule', Cambridge Journal of Economics 3 (September 1979), and Productive Relations, Labour Productivity and Choice of Technique. British and us Cotton Spinning', Journal of Economic Hustery XLI (September 1981), and Roger Penn, "Trade Union Organisation and Skill in the Cotton and Engineering Industry in British, and Roger Penn, "Trade Union Organisation and Skill in the Cotton and Engineering Industry in British, and the Labour 1850–1960', Social Hustery 8 (January 1983). But, used in computation with traditional sources, such as L. H. C. Tippett, A Portrait of the Lamonders Textule Industry, Oxford 1969, Beatrice and Sadney Webb, Industrial Dominionally, London 1962, it is possible to begin the reconstruction of women's experience. Nancy Grey Osterud, "Women's Work in Nineteenth Century Leicester: A Case Study in the Sexual Division of Labour', a paper given at the 4th Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Mount Holyoke, Massachusetts 1978, is very valuable on the homery industry

Trades, London 1917, p. 66, and Shella T. Lowenhak, Women and Trade Unions, London 1917, p. 93. Charles More raches a very different conclusion on skill in Shell and the English Working Class, 1876—1914, London 1980, but he does not discuss gender. It is a pity that Brenner and Ramas do not discuss either Anné Phillips and Barbara Taylor's, 'Sex and Skill' Notes towards a Feminist Economics', Feminist Review No. 6 (1980), or Veronica Beechey's, 'The Sexual Division of Labour and the Labour Process', in Stephen Wood, ed., The Degradation of Work, London 1982.

P Sargant Florence, 'The Theory of Women's Wages', Bossow Journal 41 (March 1931), p 36

appliances, which could be afforded by the regularly employed), this employer did not here them because any change in the sexual division of labour would have required the expensive transfer of a whole section of work from men to women. Similarly, during the acute labour shortage of World War II, most employers were prepared to employ women only on low-grade repetition jobs; even in war-time women never became a simple undifferentiated reserve army of labour. Despite Ministry of Labour and National Service pamphlets showing the various ways of using women's labour in traditionally male industries, such as shipbuilding, employers were notably reluctant to hire them. It is also important to remember that employers tended to play an even more direct and central role in maintaining patterns of sexual segregation in non-manual occupations, controlling entry to the higher professions. 30 The separation of spheres was always more complete for late 19th and early 20th-century middle-class women than for working-class women, and the tensions between the few women who entered the professions and their male colleagues were, therefore, particularly acute. A middleclass husband and employer who would not question the appropriateness of the work of his female domestic servant would not countenance his own wife going out to work.

Women also shared contemporary beliefs as to what work women were suitable for and what work was suitable for women. Ramsay MacDonald wrote that women in the printing trades met the suggestion that they might undertake tasks commonly performed by men as though something 'indelicate' had been proposed. In his Foreword to MacDonald's book, the neo-classical economist, F. Y. Edgeworth, regarded this sort of attitude as proof of the existence of 'natural monopolies' of custom regarding male and female work practices.³¹ But both men's and women's attitudes towards female paid employment changed considerably during the 20th century (a skilled workman no longer fears that his wife going out to work will result in a loss of respectability), and the labour process and the nature of domestic labour have also changed, yet sexual divisions at home and work persist. The analysis that has reached the best grasp of the historical development of this complex set of sexual relations seeks to understand the relationship between gender ideology and the material reality of women's class position. Judy Lown's work on the 19th-century Courtauld silk manufacturers shows that while these employers had no reservations about employing a predominantly female labour force, they nevertheless also organized mothers' meetings and an evening school for young female workers to teach the principles of mothercraft and a respect for domestic ideals.32 Lown has reached the important conclusion that class and gender were constructed simultaneously, an analysis that not only sits more easily with the historical evidence, but also gives more room for an adequate consideration of the nature of male power (and the construction of masculine identity) than that of Brenner and Ramas and, second, opens

³⁰ See for example Meta Zimmeck, 'Strategies and Strategeris for the Employment of Women in the Civil Service, 1919–1939', Historical Journal (forthcoming)

M J Ramsey MacDonald, Women in the Printing Tradit, London 1904, pp. viii and 65-66

Judy Lown, 'Not So Much a Factory, More a Form of Patriarchy Gender and Class during Industrialization', in Eva Ginemikow, et al., Gender, Class and Work, London 1983

up the crucial question of the production of dynamics of gender ideology.

The Persistence of Sexual Division

For the 20th century (or more accurately, the post-war period), Brenner and Ramas argue that lower fertility rates and cheaper domestic appliances made the task of biological reproduction easier 'allowing women to work at two jobs.' But even if we accept that capitalist economies will not permit the raising of the social or private wage to an extent that would permit either collective provision for work done at home or the purchase of substitutes in the market (p. 61), we are no further forward in our understanding of why it is women who continue to bear the responsibility for domestic tasks. What is it that stops men sharing domestic labour, and why is it that all women continue to perform the labour of caring for husbands, children and kin (characterized accurately and importantly by Hilary Graham as a combination of work, affection and service)?33 Brenner and Ramas acknowledge that the persistence of sexual divisions is 'partly an effect of gender ideology' (p. 61), but insist that the vicious circle of familial responsibilities and low-paid, low-status and often part-time work forces women into a primarily domestic role. But the emergence of sexual divisions has been explained in terms of 'the exigencies of biological reproduction' in the 19th century, which no longer hold. If, as the Armstrongs argue in Studies in Political Economy, biology is not immutable,34 then why do women continue to bear primary responsibility for childrearing and domestic labour when the control they are able to exercise over childbearing and the material conditions of reproduction has changed so much? Certainly free wage labour requires the separation of most aspects of reproduction from production, but this does not account for the powerful link that continues to be made in the late twentieth century between childbearing and childrearing and the domestic segregation of labour on the basis of gender. Despite the firm rejection of biological determinism by both Brenner and Ramas and the Armstrongs, there is at the very least, as Michèle Barrett has observed, a fatalism about these arguments.35 Sally Alexander may be right to turn to psychoanalytical theory, which permits the location of subjectivity and sexual difference in the unconscious and in language rather than in nature.36 The sexual division of labour most certainly still has a logic (p. 62), but that does not explain the persistence of its form.

We can only bridge this gap in the analysis by following Lown's model and considering the way in which gender ideology has been restructured, particularly in the post-war years. Professional experts (especially doctors and psychologists) emphasized the need to 'rebuild' the family

²³ Hilary Graham, 'Caring A Labour of Love', in Janet Finch and Dulcie Groves, eds., A Labour of Low Wearn, Work and Caring, London 1985

³⁴ Armstrong and Armstrong, Beyond Sexless Class', p. 32

Berrett, 'A Reply', p 124

³⁶ Alexander, Women, Class and Sexual Differences in the 1830s and 1840s'

in the post-war period.³⁷ Influential psychologists in Britain—many of whom acted as their own popularizers—saw the mother/child relationship as the key to the healthy development of the post-war generation and the 'adequacy' or 'maturity' of the mother as the key variable. Yet at the same time, the Ministry of Labour was actively encouraging women to work. The 1947 Economic Survey recorded that the prospective labour force of 18,300,000 men and women fell 'substantially short' of that required to meet national objectives.36 And the 1949 Report of the Royal Commission on Population, anticipating the increased demand for female labour, was prepared to state that there was 'nothing inherently wrong in the use of mechanical means of contraception.'39 The resolution that emerged from these contradictory tendencies was, as Penny Summerfield has convincingly argued, the conviction on the part of employers and the state, that women can combine work (particularly part-time), marriage and motherhood, without their home responsibilities being seriously undermined. 40 Pat Allatt has also shown how the literature provided for the armed forces during World War II aimed to make values explicit and to establish 'the family' as a value worth fighting for. 41 The model of the family that was used integrated the bourgeois ideal of male breadwinner, and dependent wife and children, with the actual experience of working men and women; housewife and working wife were drawn together. As Rayna Rapp has observed, the phrase 'working mother' serves to condense formerly disparate symbols, thereby legitimating experience.42 Thus, I want to suggest that Lown's analysis of the construction of gender and class in the 19th century might also be usefully applied to the post-war period when the rapid increase in capitalist production allowed women to work at two jobs and when, simultaneously and necessarily, gender ideology was reconstructed both to legitimate this change and to reinforce the primacy of women's domestic role.

The Family and the Welfare State

In the last section of their paper, which is the most unsatisfactory in terms of the understanding of the historical evidence, Brenner and Ramas consider the role of the state and ideology in the creation and reproduction of women's oppression. They reject the contention that welfare provision was granted in order to ensure the reproduction of the working class, or to conservatize or divide it. They argue rather

²⁷ For example, the essays in J. Marchant, ed., Rebuilding the Faurdy in the Past-War World, London 1946, J. C. Spence, The Purpus of Faurdy, London 1946; and the valuable work of Denne Riley, War in the Narway. Theories of the Child and the Mother, London 1983. Riley's discussion of the biological and the social and her historical analysis of the workings of particular ideologies seems especially relevant to Brenner and Rames' legitimate questions about the production and reproduction of gender ideology. ²⁸ PP, 'Economic Survey for 1947', Cmd. 7046, 1946–7, XIX, pairs. 124

PP., 'Report of the Royal Commission on Population', Cmd 7695, 1948–1949, XIX, 633, pp. 139–160. Penny Summerfield, 'Women's Work in the Second World War. A Study of the Interplay in Official Policy between the Need to Mobilize Women for War and Conventional Expectations about the Roles at Work and at Home in the Period 1939–1945', unpublished Ph D. Diss., University of Sussex., 1981. "Patricia Allait, "The Family Seen Through the Beveridge Report, Forces Education and Popular Magnatics" A Sociological Study of the Social Reproduction of Family Ideology in World War II', unpublished Ph.D. Diss., University of Keele, 1981.

⁴² Rayna Rapp, "Towards a Nuclear Freeze: The Gender Politics of Euro-american Kinship Analysis', a paper given at a conference on Family and Kinship Theory, Bellagio, Italy, 1982.

that the welfare state represents a series of concessions extracted by the working class in struggle, while acknowledging that the welfare state does not directly express working-class needs. However, if the last point is pushed, then it becomes difficult to see welfare provision simply as either imposed or conceded.

Before World War I, it is undoubtedly true that skilled male workers benefited most from the major piece of legislation, national insurance. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to argue that working-class men viewed this as an unambiguous advance; trade union opposition to the reform was intense. The first demand of the labour movement throughout the years before World War I was for the Right to Work; after that working people wanted non-stigmatizing, non-intrusive welfare.43 Furthermore, the legislation passed had different effects on working-class men and women. Class experience was fractured by gender and it is impossible to speak of the working-class family as an undifferentiated unit as Brenner and Ramas do in this section. Much early welfare provision was intrusive, and it was the working-class wife who had to deal with the school attendance officer or the health visitor and who found that the mandates of these officials often either placed impossible demands on the fragile household economy, for which she was responsible, or tended to undermine her domestic authority. With regard to the provision of school meals, for example, there is some evidence that working-class women in the early 20th century resented what they perceived as an erosion of their domestic role and, like bourgeois politicians, feared that the measure would undermine their husband's obligation to maintain. 44 Similarly, mothers who kept their daughters at home to mind the baby so that they could contribute to the family economy risked a summons to appear before the School Management Committee and in the final instance before the magistrate, while the introduction of school medical inspection without free treatment amounted, as one feminist commented, to an injunction 'to make bricks without straw.'45

In line with their emphasis on welfare provision as a series of concessions, Brenner and Ramas also find Barrett's argument that the capitalist state props up the family-household system unconvincing and point to the apparent contradiction between policies that reinforce women's dependency on men and the increasing trend since World War II for the state to take responsibility for children and other dependants (p. 64). But this is to ignore the explicit intentions behind state welfare policies as they relate to the family, which have consistently aimed to bolster the bourgeois family ideal. In the early 20th century, it is clear that the shared concern of employers and policymakers to maintain work incentives (in addition to anxiety as to the cost of dependants' benefits) made the state singularly reluctant to do anything that might

⁴³ Pat Thane elaborates this argument in "The Working Class and Scare "Welfare" in Britain, 1880–1914', *Hutsrical Journal* 27 (1984)

⁴⁴ The evidence comes from Anna Martin, Martin, Marting Wasses, London 1911 Martin, an active suffragust, worked with working-class women in a settlement in Rotherfuthe prior to World War I Although her position as a middle-class observer was obviously problematic, her testimony does seem plausible in light of the points I have made about working-class marriage.

undermine the husband's obligation to provide. Thus, no provision was made for dependants under National Insurance. When the state did grant dependants' benefits after World War I, it did so in such a way as not to threaten the husband's status as the breadwinner, and to this day. as Hilary Land has pointed out, has continued to ignore the contributions and entitlements due the working wife.46 The state has also been extremely ambivalent about stepping in to fill the place of the male breadwinner in the case of the single mother, whether widowed, deserted or unmarried. Prior to World War II, unmarried mothers, who by definition had shown no respect for the bourgeois family ideal, found it impossible to get relief outside the workhouse, while widows and deserted wives (after a testing period of one year) were either granted outdoor relief or left with one child whom they were expected to work to support, the others being taken into institutional care.47 Because of its desire to promote the bourgeois family form, the state has found it difficult to decide whether to treat the single mother as a mother or worker. In the early part of the century, the priority accorded the parental obligation to maintain tipped the balance towards the latter, but with the reformulation of family ideology in the wake of World War II and the emphasis on the mother/child dyad, the balance tipped in the opposite direction. Under the Thatcher government, the leaked reports from the Family Policy Group indicate that it may be shifting again.

Brenner and Ramas rightly point out that greater state provision has been made for wives, single mothers and children, especially in the period since World War II, and that the material importance of this provision, irrespective of the terms on which it has been offered, should not be underestimated. However, it is not clear that these developments prove either that there has been a 'contradictory trend within the welfare state towards social responsibility for children and other dependants' (p. 64), as opposed to a tendency to reinforce female dependency on men, or that they were 'grudgingly given' (pp. 65, 66). I would argue that while there have been substantial policy shifts regarding mothers and children, the state has nonetheless been consistent in its support for the bourgeois family throughout the twentieth century. Moreover, the shifts in policy direction must be explained not so much in terms of grudging concessions as in relation to the reformulation of family ideology and the differential stress placed on male and female roles within the family at different historical moments. It is not possible to elaborate this argument fully here, but in brief, I would suggest that the early 20th-century politicians and social investigators were concerned above all about working-class men's incentive to work, and it was considered dangerous for the state to relieve them of any aspect of their obligation to maintain their families. Their wives commanded more sympathy as the Domestic Chancellors of the Exchequer', albeit that they were considered profoundly ignorant of domestic skills. In the late 1940s, attention shifted entirely to the mother as the focus of both blame for family failure and hope for future

⁴⁴ Hilary Land, "The Family Wage', Femmest Rawar, No. 6 (1980)

⁴⁷ Pat Thane, "Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England", Huttery Workshop Journal, No. 6 (Autumn 1978)

improvement; it was now expected that the father would cooperate voluntarily with the state. In the recent New Right literature faith in both parents is affirmed and the role of the state in 'policing' the family is condemned.⁴⁸

Brenner and Ramas are correct to stress that the material realities of working people's lives in the 19th century made the sexual division of labour whereby women were largely confined to the domestic sphere both desired and the most practicable. But their analysis does not account for the persistence of the pattern of sexual divisions. I would suggest first that in prioritizing the need to theorize the exigencies of biological reproduction, Brenner and Ramas are in danger of underestimating the extent to which women's economic position is dependent upon multiple, complex changes in social relationships. Moreover, Sally Alexander may also be right in proposing that we should employ other analytical tools, including psychoanalysis, in our explorations of sex and class. Second, the historical evidence would suggest that gender ideology is more than a 'deus ex machina' (p. 68) and that it is indeed created in ideologies of family life as Barrett argues. In their determination to avoid a dual systems approach, Brenner and Ramas fail adequately to explore the ways in which gender ideology and women's position are analytically releated. It would seem that the dynamic of this relationship is in fact crucial to our understanding of why workingclass men and women invest shared experiences (for example, of marriage and family) with different meanings, and of how and why both working-class and middle-class prescriptions and ideals regarding women's role change over time. In the search to identify the material basis for women's oppression in captialism, the most likely path forward is to look at the way gender and class are constructed together and this requires much more preparatory historical work.

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Errata:

We apologise for the following errors in the footnotes to Ellen Meiksins Wood's article 'Marxism and the Course of History' in NLR 147:

- 1 p. 101, line 17 of para 2 there should be a n. 16 after '... as well as new needs'. Eight lines further on there should be a n. 17 after '"productive" systems'. The existing n 16 should be deleted.
- 2. Thereafter, notes 17-24 should be renumbered 18-24
- 3. note 24 should be deleted from the text: note 25 is correct.

^{**} For example, Ferdinand Mount, The Subseries Family An Alternative History of Loss and Marriage, London 1982, Brigitte Berger and Peter L. Berger, The War Over the Family, London 1983; Rita Kramer, In Defence of the Family, New York 1983.

review

David McLellan

Marx's Concept of Human Nature

In this novel treatment of an old topic, Norman Geras has found himself facing in two diametrically opposite directions: within the Marxist tradition, there are those who wish to deny legitimate room for any concept of human nature; and there are others who, so far from wishing to deny the attribution of common characteristics to human beings, think such statements about human nature to be merely self-evident, banal and therefore no integral part of a Marxist perspective. In spite of having to direct his attention to both these groups at once, Geras has avoided developing an intellectual squint by producing a precise and sharply focused discussion. As might be expected from the no-nonsense analytical style and the largely exegetical approach, he is more successful in the narrower task of disposing of the opponents of human nature than in dealing with those who insist on its irrelevance to Marxism.

Geras's book is an excellent example of the development of a distinctively Anglo-Saxon approach to Marxism.¹ Perry Anderson has recently pointed out persuasively that 'today the predominant centres of intellectual production seem to lie in the English-speaking world, rather than in Germanic or Latin Europe. . . . the traditionally most backward zones of the capitalist world, in Marxist culture, have suddenly become in many ways the most advanced.² In the fields of economics and history there has long existed a steady stream of substantial contributions from English-speaking Marxists. But only recently has this been matched by essays which bring to bear on Marxist concepts the procedural standards and analytical methods of philosophy as practised in the Anglo-Saxon world. Allen Wood's Karl Marx, Gerry Cohen's book on historical materialism and many of the articles in the journal Philosophy and Public Affairs are among the numerous examples of this trend.

Allied to philosophical precision, there is in Geras's book a refreshing commonsensical materialism. Much recent western Marxism has under-

¹ Norman Gerss, Marx and Human Nature. Refutation of a Lagual, Verso, London 1983

² P. Anderson, In The Tracks of Historical Materialism, Verso, London 1983, p. 24

standably devoted attention to the role of theory and of ideology often at the expense of the more evidently materialist aspects of traditional Marxism. Of late, this emphasis has been contested: Abercrombie, Hill and Turner have questioned the thesis of a dominant ideology and insisted that Therborn's work on ideology, for example, understates the extent of economic and political constraints (NLR 142); or again, Brenner and Ramas wish to modify Michèle Barrett's stress on the ideology of female independence by pointing to the severe limitations imposed on working-class women by the demands of pregnancy, childbirth and infant care (NLR 44). In the same vein, although of course much more generally, Norman Geras argues that the more mundane material facts of human existence are neglected by Marxists at their peril. It is a commonplace that western Marxism, for historical reasons, has had a tendency towards idealism, a purer and purer theory replacing the apparently declining opportunities for successful practice. Indeed, the long quarrel between those favouring structure as opposed to subject or subject as opposed to structure—a quarrel so central to much of western Marxism—often has very idealist overtures on both sides. For both the Althussenan and the Lukacsian traditions have little regard for empirical material. Thus work which manages to confine both philosophical rigour and respect for the self-evident realities of material life is extremely welcome.

This short book (it is barely over a hundred pages) aims to do two things: to show that Marx did not reject the idea of a human nature and also to show that he was in fact right not to do so. On the first score, Geras succeeds completely. His main target here is the widespread influence of Althusserian 'anti-humanism' in disseminating the belief that Marx's emphases on historical specificity and historical change preclude him from holding any general conception of human nature. In the face of a lot of evidence to the contrary from the whole body of Marx's work, those who wish to deny the existence of a human character that is constant have relied mainly on Marx's Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach. And it is to an extended discussion of this text that Geras devotes the first third of his book. The relevant part of the thesis reads: 'The essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations.' Geras separates out three possible interpretations of Marx's meaning: (1) that in its reality the nature of man is conditioned by the ensemble of the social relations; (2) that in its reality human nature, or the nature of man, is manifested in the ensemble of social relations; and (3) that in its reality the nature of man is determined by, or human nature is dissolved in, the ensemble of social relations. And his argument is that the first sense does not exclude a concept of human nature in that the dependence declared by it is not complete and that therefore the character of human beings must depend on something else as well and can be due in part to stable, natural causes. Nor does the second sense carry the implications that the opponents of human nature would want to see: for the reference to a social and historical diversity in no way tells against the concept of a human nature since there is nothing in the thought to say that such diversity does not contain permanent characteristics inherent in each human being. But the third sense above does involve the denial of a human nature and this is the reading of the Sixth Thesis that Geras is

concerned to contest. He does not deny that the words could bear this interpretation, but insists that, in the context of Marx's other writings, such an interpretation is totally implausible. Given that Marx had held the view as early as 1843, well before he was a historical materialist, that 'man is the world of man, the state, society' and the insistence on basic human needs in *The German Ideology* itself, Geras has no difficulty in establishing his point. More interestingly, he also shows convincingly that Marx does not depart from the view in his later writings.

Curiously, however, the one point where Geras seems to overstate his case is in attempting to use as evidence for his thesis Marx's well-known criticism of Bentham in Capital. Marx here says: 'To know what is useful for a dog, one must investigate the nature of dogs. This nature is not itself deducible from the principle of utility. Applying this to man, he that would judge all human acts, movements, relations, etc. according to the principle of utility would first have to deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as historically modified in each epoch. Bentham does not trouble himself with this. With the dryest naiveté he assumes that the modern petty bourgeois, especially the English petty bourgeois, is the normal man.' This statement of Marx's is surely completely ad hominum: the hypothetical construction means that this passage only commits Marx to a concept of 'human nature in general' if he were a utilitarian—which would certainly need some arguing for.

The final chapter of the book is more open to question. Here Geras wishes to demonstrate not only that Marx did not reject a concept of human nature, but that he was in fact right not to do so. This is a large topic. Although Geras successfully refutes a variety of objections to the view that there is a constant human nature—e.g. that this is an inherently reactionary opinion - the very brevity of his treatment raises a number of questions. The central one is the distinction between facts and values. This distinction is part of the main Anglo-Saxon philosophical tradition and one that Geras subscribes to—though this is never stated very clearly. Since Marx himself evidently did not subscribe to such a view, there is inevitably a certain amount of reconstruction to be done in giving an account of Marx's theory involving such terms—and this would demand much more space than Geras allows himself. Thus he claims that any genuine materialism must insist that human beings are 'absolutely continuous with the rest of the natural world.' But at the same time he admits that they have linguistic, productive and reasoning capacities that 'make possible a transformation of the environment that no other earthly species is capable of.' More importantly, Geras's espousal of the fact/value dichotomy leads him to suppose that important claims about human nature can be construed as empirical non-normative hypotheses. As an example, he suggests that people will in general be happier if they have the opportunity to give vent to the breadth and variety of activity that Marx thinks to be characteristically human. But it is difficult to interpret statements involving the concept of happiness without supposing that they involve value judgements. For happiness is not a value-free concept such that one can first define it and then choose whether to consider it a good. This approach leads to a separation of theory from moral judgement

that is quite uncharacteristic of Marx. To say of Capital that 'whatever else it is, theory and socio-historical explanation, and scientific as it may be, that work is a moral indictment resting on a conception of essential human needs, an ethical standpoint, in other words, in which a view of human nature is involved', is surely not an accurate description of how Marx at least conceived his work. In what is primarily conceived of as an exegetical commentary this divergence should be made a lot clearer.

Finally, a more general point as to why this book is welcome. For too long the left in general has abandoned a whole series of powerful concepts which reactionary thought has then been able uncontested to manipulate to its advantage. A whole series of socially progressive measures have been presented—quite implausibly—as having the authority of the Judaeo-Christian tradition behind them. Nationalism, also, has been an alien phenomenon for Marxists, and one that they have taken a long time to come to terms with. A narrow-minded approach has too often neglected the fact that the area of persuasive definitions is also an area of vital political struggle. The Right has been able to give the impression that it has a monopoly of religion, of naturalism, and even of 'human nature'. In the last case, at least, Norman Geras's incisive analysis has shown them to be wrong.

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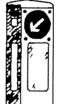
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review

Neil Belton

A Country House Childhood

Ronald Fraser is England's outstanding oral historian. In the 1960s he pioneered the sensitive recording of the texture of working peoples' experience of labour, first in the pages of this journal and later in two Penguin books, Work and Work II. His concern with lived experience in history found ambitious expression in three books on Spain: In Hiding (1972), an account of the twilight life of a Republican mayor concealed from Franco's police for thirty years; Pmblo: A Monntain Village on the Costa del Sol (1973), a broadening of his canvas to include the collective life of an entire village in the post-war period and finally the magnificent Blood of Spain (1979), nothing less than an oral history of the Spanish Civil War. That book was not only a great literary document, integrating the testimonies of hundreds of participants within a masterly narrative of the war, but also a major contribution to the historiography of modern Spain. It recast our understanding of the civil war while transforming the genre of historical writing.

Fraser's new book, In Search of a Past¹, also challenges conventional categories: an elegant and experimental work suspended astride autobiography, history and fiction. It is the narrative of a psychoanalysis of a writer who wants to write the history of his own childhood. To do so, he uses the techniques of oral history to reconstruct his past and that of his parents. Two normally discrepant forms of remembering, therefore, structure and energize the text. The book is divided into three sections that move along a chain of pronouns that form chapter headings and denote alienated relationships of various kinds ('We', 'They', 'You'), to the finally reconstituted 'I' who has—at least provisionally—come to terms with the past.

The circumstances of that past are unusual, or unusually frankly acknowledged for a Marxist traitor to his class: the inter-war world of rural, or rather 'county' Berkshire, of the monotonously sporty hunting rich. The writer's first session with his analyst sparks a determination to rework and order a series of taped interviews with the family's servants made ten years before. In this long section the present subject of the

¹ Verso, £3 95

narrative addresses the fragmented object-self of the past as a separate person: 'through them, I recall you thinking, you might at last find a way forward'. There are interviews with the nanny who brought him up, with the gardner, the groom and the housemaids. An extraordinary network of personal lives begins to emerge, dotted by the tiny struggles of the oppressed with each other, resonating in a wider political history: there is a familiar, tense combination of resentment and nostalgic deference towards the prewar past in many of the servants' reminiscences. The detail of the work they had to do, most of it drudgery, comes through without bitterness but with full consciousness of oppression. They couldn't speak unless they were spoken to; were banished from the front of the house, like incidental landscape figures, when friends came to call; like the groom, were sent off to the war after seven years' service without a sentimental word or a valedictory fiver. Rarely has the human cost of the English bourgeoisie's dream of country life been so carefully registered and dissected. That the mother was American and the father Scottish probably gave an extra edge of insensitivity to their behaviour. The divisions and contradictions among the servants are fascinating: for the nanny (a German to whom England was a weird place of horses, sport and Gracie Fields) the writer's father treated the servants as human beings, while for the gardener (who had to put leather shoes on the donkey before he mowed the grass) he treated people like pigs.

A double relationship of class difference and personal identification is established: finding 'yourself' in the discourse of 'their' class oppression. Although he is in a sense searching for his own identity in the identity denied to them, what they are recalling is a hidden history that lends reality to the blanks of his early childhood. Through these non-familial witnesses (defined by a specifically class relationship) he can begin to restore the phantasized damage done to the love objects of his past (a specifically psychic relationship, figured in the text in broadly Kleinian terms): a kind of personal history from below.

In strictly psychological terms the relationships are even more complex. His relationship with his parents is marked by coldness, distance and separation, physical as well as psychic. Both the psychoanalysis and the history allow him to progress beyond a vision of the mother as split between indifference on the one hand and magical love, permitting anything to happen, on the other. Before the war, she represents an unreachable realm of freedom. Then she recalls him from some unnamed and grim public school. In the context of rapidly transformed social relations that alter his relationship with the 'village'—untouchable before he lives in an idyllic union with the mother until displaced by the airman she leaves his father for. Coming to terms with this phantasized ideal mother also involves repairing the guilt he feels towards the father, stiff, conventional, all tenderness socialized out of him by the rituals of army and hunt. The psychoanalytic exchange is intercut by memories of another dialogue with a senile old man being driven toward a nursing home, which gradually reveals itself as the prelude to the father's death: a sadness with an oedipal anger burned into it.

If the parental relation is the primary one it is paralleled by and contrasted with his identification with the servants. The split ego of the child is jarred into a quadrifocal pattern of allegiance: the gardener Bert and the nanny at times take on the role of 'good' mother and father. The tension of this family romance carved out of class differences is one of the most intriguing ironies of the book.

As might be expected from the author of Bloed of Spain, the oral history is brilliantly done, integrating the normally absent subjectivity of the questioner with great delicacy. The dialogue of the reconstructed psychoanalysis is handled in a way that allows the language of explicit interpretation (depressive position, projection and so on) to emerge as a necessary part of the reconstruction of the fragmented psyche, and also to engage in a submerged debate with the rival claims of materialist history. At one point the analyst objects to Fraser's obsession with 'someone else's testimony', declaring that 'what happened is less important than what is felt to have happened'. Later he can accept, still without believing that there are complementary theories to his own, that the writer wants to become the 'historian of his own past' in the book that is an issue during the analysis.

In Search of a Past interweaves different modes of narrative, setting different causalities to work against each other. The deliberately multiple focus questions the self-present adequacy of both materialist and psychosexual forms of determination. Class and existential alienation, the duality of mother and nanny and the cultural dynamics of the parental split are all actualized, and are inseperable. But although the figure of the T is not fixed and has in this sense no simple hierarchical causation, it is not a Lacanian subject rollercoasting along the symbolic order—the mother's body may be part of the unattainable 'real', but the meanings it generates are constrained, grounded and determinate in the context of the work as a whole. It is rather difficult to argue, attractive though it might seem at first sight, that the book is a classically modernist autobiography: decentred, riven by multiple voices, polyvalent. The anxious stress of the text, enacted in the interviews with the servants, is on the operative weight of historical structures of class. Creative exploration of the intense space between the political filiation implied here, and the personal trauma of embodying it, has produced a work that challenges the fashionable conventions of post-structuralism and of the older drama of the Bildungsroman—refusing, in particular, the latter's classic resolution of the tension betwen 'autodetermination' and 'socialization'2. There is never a moment at which the young Fraser is pictured as alow; never full of the bumptious anxieties of precocity, like Sartre's image of himself in Las Mots.

An equally interesting undercurrent in the text is its subversion of a prevalent literary-political form of identification with conservative constructions of the past: rural, big-house nostalgia, where either youthful fulfillment or romantic disillusion create a lost eden. The fall from grace becomes the most significant movement of all, displacing

² See Franco Morem, Baldmarranea, Milan 1985 for a comprehensive and brilliant account of the 'novel of development' in European culture

the personal onto the historical and history into myth. The characteristically melancholic versions of this form, from *Brideshead Resisted* to *Woodbrook* have their counterpart in the mass cultural exploitation of tragic historicism. Fraser admittedly owns to 'a deep yearning for what might have been' in the ideal summertime of the war, before the twin certainties of maternal bounty and patriotic classlessness disintegrated. But the real work of the text is of realistic reparation: making good, broken internal objects in order to totalize the past while recognizing that they can never be restored. It's the richness of the resistance to this process that gives the book its strength.

The book also activates a second kind of integration of the past. If the first is reparation—the adult recognition of separateness and loss—the other is recuperation, a 'fantastic' over-completion of the lost object that probably must accompany any attempt to externalize it. The calmness, the near-formalism of the encounters between Fraser and his analyst P. must be related to this pre-oedipal completeness of the recovered past symbolized by the mother. Purists would say that Fraser's is not a proper analysis: we are spared the furies of transference ' and the full unravelling of his relations with his father. The implication that the achievement of the text indicates a hereafter, a cure, redirects our attention to the phantasies that knotted the character into what it i was, but also embodies a distinct form of nostalgia, a recuperative 'acting-out'. This integrative ego of the finished narrative moves in parallel, but in a different temporal space, to the reparative process. The power of re-enactment here is that it gestures, in its transparently illusory closure, towards a dialogue between forms of intersubjectivity: neither the banal triumphalism of the successful transference nor the trim tronies of the inter-class encounter

In Search of a Past is a new departure in the form of personal writing on the left. Its confessional element can be traced to the openness about personal vulnerability made possible by the resurgence of feminist autobiography; its formal structure owes much to the nowean roman and its integration of popular experience would be unthinkable without the new sophistication of oral history. The personal here occupies the political, but this is not the recessional of defeat and neo-liberalism. The rival claims of self and history are held in careful tension. As a social document of the miseries of a ruling-class upbringing, from which few of its children are likely to be liberated in the very near future, the book has few rivals; as autobiography it allows us to speculate about how subjects are produced. In either case it is a pleasure to read, clearly written and beautifully constructed.